THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

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UNSATISFIED.

WRITTEN FOR THE SATURDAY EVENING POST.

BY FLORENCE PERCY.

The winter frowns and threatens,—
  The trees stand black and bare,—
And hints of storm and tempest
  Are in the gloomy air.
Our summer joy has vanished,
  Our faith and hope lie dumb;
We ask each other sadly,
  "Will April ever come?"

Yet when as August glory
  Lay bright about our feet,
Flowers drooped, and birds sat songless
  Beneath the scorching heat—
We murmured at the summer,
  And wished its days gone by,
And pictured peace and pleasure
  Beneath a cooler sky.

Oh, is there not an island,
  Afar amid the sea,
Where summer never scorches,
  Nor winter chills the lea?
Where roses never wither,
  Nor birds forget their song—
And where the morning-glories
  Stay open all day long?

Yet vain would be our searching
  For peace and happiness,
Ev'n could we find an Eden
  Dowered with the perfect bliss
Of every charm and beauty
  That lies between the poles,
If we should carry with us
  These discontented souls.

Oh, restless human spirits,
  Which will not be content,
How much delight soever
  Is to our being lent!
We lose the present pleasure
  In striving more to win,
And break our hearts with yearning
  For what has never been.

Oh, life! must these deep longings
  Be ever unfulfilled?
Oh, time! must youth and summer
  Be always nipped and chilled?
Oh, death! thou com'st to answer—
  Till then we must endure
The thirsting and the hunger
  Which life can never cure.

THE

DEATH SHADOW OF THE POPLARS.

WRITTEN FOR THE SATURDAY EVENING POST,

BY MRS. MARGARET HOSMER.

AUTHOR OF "THE MORRISONS," &c.

CHAPTER III.

MISS COPELAND AS HEAD OF THE HOUSEHOLD.

Miss Olivia Copeland knew nothing of society beyond its rules and theories as imparted by the accomplished ladies at Madam Legree's Academy. She had lived in New York up to the date of her mother's death, but it was in a pinched and meagre style that formed but a dreary picture in the past when she turned to it, without aiding her at all in meeting the present. She was three years older than her sisters, and therefore had met the difficulties and assumed the responsibilities of that wretched life alone. Her mother was ailing for years, and petulant and querulous beyond description. They had an income—which Olivia afterwards suspected to come from her aunt—and might have lived comfortably through its means, if the selfish and wholly uncalculating invalid had acted with wisdom or judgment in its outlay. Every luxury that her poor vitiated fancy suggested was purchased whilst it lasted, and the deprivations, occasioned by its being so foolishly squandered, were met with bitter repinings on her part, and many ingenious contrivances on that of her eldest daughter to supply the needs of her little sisters, and mitigate her own.

Mrs. Copeland's death had been the commencement of comfort for her wretched children, who found in a well-conducted establishment and kind teachers, a very different atmosphere from the pitiable excuse for home they had endured since their earliest recollection. Adah and Bertha were naturally dependent creatures, and easily fell in with any plan or system presented to them, but Olivia had often wondered at and striven to unravel the mystery of a relative and benefactress, who steadily refused to see the objects of her benevolence. She had even written to Miss Bessard privately—stating her gratitude and devotion to the source of her happiness, and confessing how altered their fortunes were—but to her surprise, had found the letter returned to her own dressing-table, with a line, in pencil, from the hand of Madam Legree herself, saying that Miss Bessard had declined holding any correspondence with her wards, but if Miss Copeland had anything of importance to communicate to her relative, Madam Legree would charge herself with the personal conveyance of the message. So Olivia never saw her aunt living or dead, and came into her place and position with no clearer knowledge of her predecessor than might be gleaned from the full-length picture in the great drawing-room. The splendid chamber where the deceased had lain in state, was aired and put in order; and a week after the funeral the young lady of The Poplars took possession of all it contained, and looked over the splendid brocades and rare laces in the great wardrobe with a view to the time when they would be in keeping with her new dignity and its requirements. Her sisters occupied a joint chamber and dressing-room on the other side of the hall, and Miss Raye was lodged, to her own pleasure, in the apartment she had first entered. Miss Copeland was scrupulously polite and attentive to this young person, whom she nevertheless instinctively disliked and distrusted. She never questioned who she was, or where she came from; and to her less discreet sisters, who began guessing and wondering about her as soon as they had become sufficiently accustomed to the place to speculate about anything individually, she returned a short and decisive answer—

"I have reason to know that she is just as much, and no more or less, at home here than we are. Miss Bessard meant her to share with us, unquestionably, all she left."

But after marvelling at and about her, *the younger girls grow very much charmed with Miss Raye, whilst their sister still retained her first manner and first course of action.* She was the brightest, keenest, merriest little thing in the world, and they found her so amusing and delightful, that they fairly haunted her chamber and hung around her at all times as a source from which great pleasure could be derived.

She seemed equally well pleased with them, and curled their long, fair ringlets, and tied their sashes, and helped them to arrange flowers for painting, and taught them how to do a variety of pretty nothings well suited to their minds.

They were innocent, unthinking creatures, without depth of feeling or any evil propensity whatever. Their elder sister was a marvel of strength of character in their eyes, whose decision and energy they were content to admire without emulating, and whose word was always incontestable authority.

Of Barbara these timid girls were very much afraid. She seemed to them in some mysterious way connected with the dead lady, their aunt, and her impenetrable face and reticent mood awed them. They could only admire their sister's calm and dignified manner towards this respected servant, without being able to comport themselves in the same way. Since her mistress's death, Barbara's position had become one of greater importance than ever in the household of The Poplars.

No one so well understood Miss Bessard's habits of management; and Olivia, desirous of fulfilling the dead lady's wishes in every respect, gave her former favorite the position of housekeeper, and paid her the respect of consulting her on every business question arising out of the arrangement of the house and its surroundings.

Mr. Bond had a great deal to do with the disposition of rents and dividends, and his constant attendance and frequent perplexity was an additional proof of that administrative ability that had distinguished Miss Bessard, since all the weight and responsibility of her great fortune had never caused her sufficient trouble to call in aid any but her own business powers, and she had bought and sold, transferred and improved, for all these years, consulting no one, and only calling on her lawyer when legal forms became necessary to secure a contract.

Miss Copeland was by no means a poor successor of so shrewd a lady. She was a young person of excellent judgment and great decision of character. She knew how to value her present fortune, by contrasting it with her narrow experiences in the past—and yet she was neither pretentious nor arrogant.

There is no doubt that she was quite as curious as her sisters on the subject of Miss Raye and her mysterious connection with her Aunt Bessard, but she was far too wise to hazard any inquiry concerning her among the common people of the neighborhood; and Mr. Bond, she felt sure, knew as little on the subject as she did herself.

There was something about the girl that filled her with distrust and instinctive suspicion; and she saw, with annoyance the strong hold she was gaining on her sisters' affection and confidence. She would not warn them against her, because she really had no cause of complaint; and she was too just to state her prejudices in that form; besides, she felt sure that Bertha and Adah already gave themselves so completely up to the girl's influence, that they were more than likely to mention any suggestion their sister would make in her disfavor.

A good deal of company came to The Poplars—not actually gay society, but a sort of social, quiet system of morning visiting, that did not at all scandalize the deep mourning robes of its young mistress, but rather prepared them for the small world about them into which they should come to reign as a quartette of belles when the first gush of their sorrow had subsided.

Among them all, Mrs. Wallace, of Riverbend, took a prominent place as she had done in the days of Miss Bessard—she even assumed something tenderly maternal in her manner to Olivia, and invited confidence by her winning sweetness and ready appreciation of that young lady's character.

"My dear Miss Copeland," she would say, "you cannot imagine how you charm us all with your wonderful system and ability. Such a trying position for so young a lady, and such a mingling of responsibility. Your sisters of course, have always realized your superiority; but Miss Raye, a perfect stranger, I believe—such a delicate position, and so admirably as you acquit yourself."

"My aunt managed everything so completely, that I have really very little to do but follow in the line of her instructions. You are very good, dear Mrs. Wallace, but you over-rate my difficulties, and forget what a delightful help I have in Barbara, my aunt's woman. It is really wonderful how thoroughly she understands her duties, and fulfills them.

Thus would Olivia make answer, steadily declining to enter on the subject of Leonore, *to the great provocation of the lady at Riverbend, who, like all the rest of the neighbors of The Poplars, felt a strange curiosity on the subject of that odd little creature.*

Concerning these neighbors Olivia spoke with her sisters, and preferring that Miss Raye should take her views from her own lips rather than the report she suspected they would give her, she chose to go into the morning parlor, where they were assembled together, being exceedingly busy in the construction of some ingenious bit of frivolity, under their little instructor's directions. The great lawn outside the windows was covered with snow, and the bright December sun made glittering work among the icicle-laden trees beyond.

"It is a grand winter morning," said Miss Copeland, pleasantly; "there are invitations for us to go and watch the skaters from Mrs. Darwood's drawing-room windows. They are in full view of the pond at the glen, and it will be a gay sight."

Adah and Bertha were very inconsiderate young ladies, simply because they were not given to thinking deeply on any subject.

"Why should we be perched up in the windows?" said Adah.

"Cannot we skate as well as the rest?" cried Bertha.

Their sister frowned slightly.

"It will be a sort of Carnival, and all the dresses will be of the gayest patterns. You can imagine we would not look in keeping in our heavy mourning, as your own mind will suggest, if you will listen to it."

"Pshaw!" said both young ladies at once. "How stupid to have to mope when all is gayety."

"Should you have been very gay had you remained at Madam Legree's?" asked Leonore, simply. "It was rather dull at our pensionat."

"Yes, that is true," assented the sisters at once; "it is better here than in the quiet old place in the city."

"Mrs. Wallace will take us," pursued Olivia. "I suppose it is better to be matronized by her than any one we know here. Do you not think so, Miss Raye?"

Leonore stood by the window in the glow of the shimmering sunlight, her bright brown hair lighted into deep gold by the gleam. She looked so witchingly pretty and fairy-like in face and figure, she was always so light and airily poised, that she seemed merely resting on earth, and had such quaint grace and such odd impulsiveness in every movement, that the quiet, dignified young mistress of the hall found something objectionable in this very captivation, and made her inquiry in a cool, business-like tone.

"Mrs. Wallace," Leonore answered, rather in a sort of musing tone. "Oh! yes, the lady with the handsome son, certainly, I had forgotten—by all means."

Olivia's cheeks deepened in color just a trifle, but she gave no other sign of annoyance at the reminder. Her two sisters were seated on a crimson lounge drawn close to the open hearth, whereon a great fire glowed and roared and crackled lustily. She took a seat near by and said—

"There are plenty of pleasant ladies who have offered us their service and protection; Mrs. Darwood herself, for instance. Do you prefer her?"

She looked at Leonore as she spoke, but evidently the little lady did not mean to see the question as meant for her. She took up some ivy leaves she had been twining and laid the wreath among the pale gold hair of Bertha, rolling back her curls with fanciful art, to set off the smooth, shining chaplet.

Adah said Mrs. Darwood was nice and the Glen was lovely, which was quite as satisfactory a view of the case as her elder sister expected from her. Olivia was decided and determined. Miss Raye had intimated in a disagreeable way, she thought, that Mrs. Wallace was not the right chaperon. She made up her mind that she should suggest another or give up her objection.

"Mrs. Darwood is young and very gay and entertaining. She is a trifle coquettish and flippant in her manner, I think, and that is why she did not suggest herself to me." She looked full at Leonore and asked plainly, "What do you think of her?"

"Of Mrs. Darwood?" said Leonore, busy with the curls and leaves. "Let me see. Do I think anything at all about Mrs. Darwood? No, I don't believe I do, really."

This was provoking, but Olivia did not allow herself to be put out of temper.

"Mrs. Grover, perhaps," she suggested.

"There are three shades of difference between your hair and Bertha's," whispered Leonore to Adah.

"She is an elderly person, but her two daughters go with her everywhere, and I feared to burden her with the charge of so many more. She is a good and reliable woman, full of kind feeling and a valuable friend. The young ladies are nice, sensible girls, that we might cultivate with advantage."

"Miss Grover is nice and pleasant, but Miss Phœbe is so clever that she overcomes one," murmured Bertha, in faint dissent.

Miss Raye said nothing, but changed her position, and taking a view of her handiwork, began to add scarlet Christmas berries to the coronal with which she had crowned her friend.

"The Wetheringtons, of Maple Hill, are a charming family, but so large a household as theirs really has no need of additional interests. To be sure, Mrs. Barton Wetherington is a matron and unencumbered, but she is only a year or two older than I am, and I don't see how we are to explain making such a selection."

"I like Mrs. Barton," said Adah, with great vivacity; "so does Leonore, I'm sure. She's so witty and merry, and when she and Mrs. Darwood meet, they make every one laugh and enjoy themselves."

"I know she is very agreeable," assented her sister. "Am I to understand, Miss Raye, that you would prefer her to Mrs. Wallace?"

Leonore dropped a shower of little berries into Adah's lap, and looked up in palpable astonishment.

"What a funny question," she cried, bursting into laughter, after retaining her surprised look for a moment or two. "Do I prefer bright, vivacious, merry Mrs. Barton Wetherington to quiet, dignified, elderly Mrs. Wallace? Do I like fun and jollity, or do I prefer wisdom and decorum? Why, I like both, of course, but I don't mean to compare them."

"You said Mrs. Wallace was objectionable on account of her son," reiterated Olivia, "and I suggested the rest of our intimate friends for the sake of finding which you liked best."

"Mrs. Wallace's son! Oh, that is Mr. Louis Wallace. Did I speak of him? I had forgotten. But I could not have objected to him, because I think he is perfectly charming."

Miss Copeland was inwardly thoroughly provoked with the aggravating little face that looked up into her own with all simplicity, and only displayed by the tiniest curve of her pretty brows the lingering surprise she felt at the singular tone of the conversation.

But the elder sister was calm and self-controlled from habit, and although she blushed faintly at the repetition of Mr. Wallace's name, she smiled and said that she had no doubt misunderstood Miss Raye, and wished to feel sure that she was satisfied even in so small a matter as the choice of a chaperon.

"You too are pleased, are you not?" queried that disagreeably sharp young lady, looking keenly at the head of the household for one moment, and then breaking into a merry laugh and appearing all innocence as she added—"it's such a trouble to take thought about all those little trifles that I am glad I am not in authority here."

"Oh, yes," said Bertha, "Aunt Bessard knew just how to manage matters when she made Olivia chief of the establishment, everybody says so, particularly Mrs. Wallace, she never gets done praising her or her admirable judgment."

"And your sister appreciates her in turn, which is so pleasant," said Leonore confidentially, then turning to Olivia, she said with child-like frankness, "you *are* very sensible, are you not? Now, what do you call that peculiar sort of way you have—it amounts to a talent, I know, but it's a manner for all that."

"You will have to make yourself plainer before I can answer," said Olivia, half laughing.

"Well, you tell the servants your wishes, and they never think of suggesting or gainsaying, or doing anything, in fact, except obeying promptly, and you decide for every one and arrange for every one, and every one feels perfectly satisfied and it's all right. Now if I were to attempt anything of the kind I should get into such a maze of confusion and botheration that I wouldn't have a particle of peace in my existence. It's the art of government, I suppose, and you understand it thoroughly."

"I try to do what appears to be my duty," said Olivia quietly. "I suppose we all do the same." And having said this she rose and left them with an added word or two about the time Mrs. Wallace would call.

As she closed the door, Leonore made this startling announcement—

"I have a fancy to put on a Polish costume of green velvet trimmed with fur, and boots with fur anklets, and a lovely square-topped cap with a band of ermine round the brim."

"Oh," cried Adah and Bertha in one breath, "think of our mourning; Olivia would be shocked, and it would seem such disrespect to the memory of our aunt."

"My dears," answered the erratic maid, "I haven't one single article of the whole suit, so I shant wear it this afternoon, but I have the fancy, as I say, and I think it would look lovely."

"But you wouldn't mean to show disrespect to Aunt Bessard's memory, would you?" inquired Bertha gently. "You know, although she never let us see her, that we might learn to love her, she was very good to us all."

"I wish she had," cried Leonore impetuously, "it is a burden to feel gratitude and reverence for a mere idea. I never ceased striving to see and speak to her until the news of her death was brought, and then, even then I tried to look on her dead body, but it was too awful."

"We did not see her, they would not let us look at her at all."

"I wish I had been restrained as you were, for the memory is fearful. It was not like a face that had ever lived, but a grand and terrible statue, fearfully ghastly, with such an unearthly color. Oh, I wanted to rush from the place lest it should haunt me after I had looked at it."

She shuddered and turned white herself as she recalled the sight and its effect on her mind; then she added mysteriously,

"She had something to tell me that she never let me know; how did I feel sure that she would not return from the dead to speak the truth."

"Oh," cried Bertha shivering, "don't say such things, it is frightful to think of them."

"They never could happen," said Adah. "Olivia says they are all idle tales that speak of ghosts and warnings."

"I cannot tell," said Leonore musingly. "I never saw a spirit, but I think they have been seen by others. Barbara, for instance, she looks to me as if they might come to her at any time."

"Oh, Barbara," said Adah timidly, "she is a very peculiar person, but she is so gentle and mild when she comes near you, Leonore. Do you like her, or why is it that she meets you with a different manner from the one she assumes to us?"

"Does she?" asked Leonore carelessly. "I do not notice; she is curious enough, I suppose, but I never thought about her, and I do wish I had a Polish dress to skate in this afternoon at the Glen."

CHAPTER IV.

CRAZY JEAN.

While the young ladies talked together in the morning-room, a curious figure came tramping up the slope from the bridle path that wound out of the wood below the park. She was a tall, spare, muscular woman, with hard but regular features, and piercing black eyes that gleamed like living coals from beneath her shaggy brows. She was old, for her hair was almost white, and her face was seamed with age marks, but her angular, upright figure confessed no signs of failing strength, and her walk or rather stride was full of vigor. She wore a coarse woolen skirt of a dark color, and had buttoned over it a loose pea jacket rough and heavy. Her head was decorated with a black silk handkerchief bound round her brows, and from under it her white locks floated freely. Over this she wore a broad-brimmed felt hat, drawn down at the sides with black strings, and tied under the chin. She was a strange looking figure as one could well imagine, and carrying a pack upon her shoulders and an oblong basket strapped before her, she whistled a loud cheery tune with the voice and emphasis of a man. She reached the gate of the lower garden, and opened it with the ease of one familiar with the place; stepping inside, she changed her whistle for a shrill, clear song.

"And we'll go no more a roving, roving, roving,
And we'll go no more a roving so late into the night,"

she sang as she came up the walk leading to the servants' hall.

"Oh, it's Crazy Jean," cried Molly the young errand girl, rushing in with the news as she caught sight of the odd appearance.

"Yes, yes, it's Crazy Jean, come out of the highlands where thistles and roses grow on the same stem," returned the new-comer, making her way in boldly. "But there's been a dreary morning here, a black, dreary morning, they have cut down the gay tulip, the brave old tulip. Where's Barbara?"

"She's up in her own room, Jean," said Margery the cook. "She's the housekeeper now, and has the place of a lady, though she doesn't make any show of ruling us, but does her duty quietly enough for the matter of that."

"Yes, I've heard it all; you see I have a bird that carries news, and I would have been here long ago but for a little job I had on hand."

"Was there ever such a woman for little secrets?" cried Molly, laughing.

"Little, said ye!" exclaimed Crazy Jean. "Aye, call them little, and there's no harm done, but some of them are not so small for all that."

"Here's Barbara," said Margery.

"And here's Crazy Jean, Dame Barbara, and how's your mighty ladyship, the housekeeper of Poplar Hall?"

There was an affectation of absurdity in this salutation, that her face as she turned it eagerly on Barbara, who appeared in the doorway, failed to carry out. It was a keen, searching look, half inquiring, half suspicious, and wholly deep and penetrating. Barbara had evidently been expecting her.

"Here at last," she said; "if you had not regarded the trouble of your friends, your own good fortune should have brought you sooner."

"I was far away, far away," answered the other, "but I heard the sorrow, and a black sorrow it was; the place is empty without her, and ye were poor creatures to let her die in the night time all alone."

"If you heard so much you must have heard more—she was not sick or ailing in any way, so there was no call for watchers. Mr. Bond advertised you. He made the will, and has charge of the property."

"Yes, I know the little bit of money coming to me wouldn't run away, and so I wasn't in a hurry. You've got a room of your own, they say, will you let a tramper like me go into it?"

Barbara turned without answering, and led the way up stairs, while the wandering woman with nimble fingers unfastened her load and her basket, and slid them both into a broad window seat.

"Mind that you don't take to meddling with what's there before I open it," she said warningly. "I carry queer things sometimes, and none but skillful hands can touch them safely."

Then she followed Barbara up to the door of a room on the first floor, but a few steps lower than the drawing-room and parlors.

It was a sort of office, with a secretary and writing desk, and two or three tall cupboards and cabinets among its furniture.

"This was where I first saw her, full forty years ago," murmured the stranger in an awe-struck undertone. "There, at that desk, she sat with a bunch of keys in her hand, and I can bring back the very look of her face."

"You were younger then, yourself," said the housekeeper, looking at her narrowly.

"It's likely I was, but it was of Miss Bessard I was thinking. She was a grand looking lady always, and never let the mask drop, you know."

"As for that she may never have worn one at all. She had her disappointments and troubles to begin with, if old stories be true, but her life was happy enough for all that, and her natural manner being a little high and grand like, gave folks to think that she put it on to hide her real story. I never was one to be so misled."

"Far-sighted Barbara, that has nothing to hide, and thinks all the world as innocent as herself! Why, woman alive, you know, and I know that all three of us were false faces. You, for your own hidden nature's sake, that makes a secret of itself to itself, me because it's my trade and pleasure, but Miss Bessard puzzled us to find her reason, we saw the mask, and that was all."

"You know more about her, having been longer coming and going around the place," said the housekeeper warily.

"I know enough to know that you are playing with me, Barbara, and that there was something about her death that hasn't yet been told. What was it, now?"

With an assumption of frankness and cajolery, she approached the unresponding Barbara, and added in an undertone—

"Maybe I could give you news to pay for the telling. I saw a handsome gentleman lately, who was once an actor at Wynhope more than twenty years ago."

Instantly the housekeeper's face changed, she drew a quick, short breath that was like a gasp, and catching the other's arm, cried hush, and looked about her affrightedly as if suspecting even the walls as listeners.

"You remember the solemn oath you gave me, Jean?" she whispered imploringly. "Think how I have trusted you, and you alone. One word from you would drive me from this place, but warn me of it before you speak it."

"Pooh! but you're ever ready to fly the wrong way," laughed Crazy Jean; "be sensible, and give up your mysteries with me; did the lady die a true death?"

"What do you mean, Jean, I know nothing of the death she died; how should I?"

"You found her dead, and had the first look at everything before you gave the alarm."

"What could I see?" demanded Barbara, "she carried her secrets to the grave with her. No one knew about these nieces, nor the other girl, till they were brought here."

Jean laughed.

"Unless, indeed, you knew all about it, which is like enough," said Barbara suspiciously.

To this the strange woman returned not a word, but looked steadily at the housekeeper from under her heavy brows in silence.

"There was something about the death that you do not tell, and that I must wait to find out for myself," she said at length. "Well, well, there was a penny for you, and a penny for me. I'm a poor toiling body, and I needed my bit of silver sorely."

"There are four mistresses now," said Barbara, "all young and pretty, and as soon as the mourning is over they will give their minds to finery—a good chance for you, Jean."

Jean nodded, and drew her brows together.

"Which do you serve, my cunning Barbara," she asked; "which is the one worth heeding?"

"Miss Copeland takes her aunt's place, because she is the eldest," said Barbara.

"She takes it because she is mistress, too," said the peddler-woman. "The other two are figures of straw. Come, I'll be open with you. I knew of them all, and Miss Bessard had only my word to hold me. You see, Barbara Berryl, it is something to trust in after all. The little girl, Miss Leonore Raye, you make no mention of her?"

"She was not spoken of, you know," said Barbara rather reluctantly; and she hastened to change the theme by asking if Jean did not think Miss Copeland partook of her aunt's manner and disposition in some degree.

"She seemed a girl of spirit," said the stranger, "but I thought more about the little one—the one I named to you. I wonder that you let her slip your notice as you do. She's pretty enough, surely."

"Yes, pretty enough, no doubt," said Barbara, hastily. What will you do with your money, Jean?"

If the question were meant as a home thrust to turn the peddler's attention from Miss Raye, it succeeded admirably, for her face changed instantly from its keen boldness of expression to a whining, hypocritical look, as she whimpered—

"I'm a poor, hard-working body, and I need all I can get; it's little enough, only a poor penny reward for forty years of service; nobody need grudge it to me, I'm sure."

"But what will you do with it? You'll surely give up your wandering ways and live in comfort?"

"Oh, what a poor comfort it would be," whined Jean, "and how soon I'd get to the end of it. I must work all the harder, for I've lost a good customer, and there's little doing that pays now-a-days."

"You have something to tell me," whispered Barbara, bringing her face close to the ear of her visitor. "Speak now, for Miss Copeland will be in to give her parting orders; they are going to ride out this afternoon."

"It's worth a good deal to wander as I do in all weathers and fear nothing, let me meet what I will," said Jean, and she held out her hand, into which her friend slowly counted three silver pieces.

"It is all I have here, and I will get you more if that does not satisfy you."

"It's poor satisfaction, Barbara, but I work for friendship, and that's what pays me, that's what pays me."

She closed her hand on the money with a sudden clutch, and slid it through her fingers into her pocket. Then she smiled such a grim, curious sort of smile, and drew a long, satisfied sigh.

"I went to Wynhope six weeks ago, and I found the old man poorly but decently cared for, as you know. He fails fast, but is quiet and well contented, and talks of you to Esther without grieving."

The quiet Barbara turned away her impenetrable face, and would not even have it looked upon by her confidante. Jean went on—

"I left the money with Esther, taking out my own allowance for the journey. She was full of questions, for which I had no answers, and when I reached the city I took another track, fancying that she traced me. It was not so. She would not leave the poor old man, you know."

"Was there nothing more?"

"Aye, was there—that little job was paid for, you know, and I took your money just now for something new. What was it, do you think? Whisper close. I can tell you where Dorsett, the actor, may be seen any day."

Barbara put her hand upon the speaker's mouth and rose quickly, looking around her in terror of being overheard. "Not in America?" she said, in a dry, husky voice, that betrayed in its unnatural tone the effort she was making to appear at ease.

She tried to look coolly at Jean, who, leaning forward, read her face as she talked; but it was not a successful attempt, her thin white lips worked nervously, despite her will, and she repeated, with a trembling voice, "Not in America!"

"Yes, at your very side, to be seen any chance day that you may happen to walk out beyond the lodge gate."

"There is none of that name within the whole range of the country," said the housekeeper, in a startled, anxious tone. "No, no; I have my eyes and ears, and miss nothing; if such a name were mentioned, I would be likely to know it."

"I told you once that the name was false. You never believed me. Now you will find for yourself that I spoke truly."

"I have had reason to think differently, Jean. That is the real name, I know. If there is another, it is the assumed one. Did you see him?"

"Yes, and spoke to him, too. He asked me about the house here, and seemed to have taken up his quarters hereabouts, from the interest he felt in the neighborhood."

"Did he know— I mean, did he guess who you were? or did he seem to talk like a man with an object in view?"

"As for knowing me, how should he? He never saw me but once, and then in a different guise. He was walking with a handsome young man, who might be his son, for looks; but there is no kin between them. They stopped me to talk the foolish chit-chat of the quality; the younger one would sketch my likeness, and the actor that was, grew deeply interested in the process. I watched him closely, and it made me laugh to see how lightly all these years lay on his head. He has the laugh and swagger of the Romeo days."

"Jean, let the man go. I have no wish to hear more of him. Here is Miss Copeland."

Olivia tapped at the housekeeper's door, and stood there when Barbara hastened to open it, fully dressed in her sable carriage gear, looking very handsome and stately in her flowing mourning robes. She gave a little start when she saw the queer looking guest of her housekeeper, and stepped backward when the burning black eye met hers, but she was a gracious as well as sensible young lady, and the pause was only of a second's duration, and she smiled and said she presumed it was her aunt's legatee, the trusty Jean, as Miss Bessard had termed her, of whom they had all heard so much.

"Yes, my lovely lady," said Jean, rising and coming forward, "I was deeply honored by her kind remembrance, but more deeply grieved by her sad loss. She was a grand lady, and you deserve to succeed her, if a wandering creature like poor Jean dare speak so free."

The young mistress of The Poplars smiled gravely.

"It is a weighty compliment you pay me, Jean," she said. "I wish that I may be deserving of it. Have you seen Mr. Bond yet?"

"Yes, bonny lady, I've seen him, and he counted out the little gift, as in duty bound. The wages of forty years' service, Miss, a long time, a long time."

"The Poplars must not lose your good offices, Jean, though its noble mistress is gone. You must allow us to see you often, and do not fail to let us have the benefit of your choice in laces."

This kindly invitation was received with many thanks by the wily peddler woman, who seemed keenly alive to business gain in every sense. She had brought with her some of the choicest of jets, she hastened to say, and had some rare India mull, with black floss bordering.

"But now we are going away for the afternoon. When next you come we may be at leisure. Barbara, there will be company to tea, and you will see that it is served in the green parlor. Good day to you, Jean; remember to let us profit by your skill in laces."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

☞ CHAMPAGNE.—Very exquisite champagne is made in New York out of Sauterne wine, with a judicious admixture of rock candy to furnish a "head," brandy to tickle the brain, and various essences to give a "bouquet," and exceedingly good imitations of the foreign labels are attached. This production escapes duty, of course, and generally manages to elude the tax of six dollars a dozen. It is to impose this tax, and not from any motive of advantage to the drinkers of spurious wines, that the descent has been made upon several manufactories. It is too good a business to be broken up.

☞ Judge Turner, of Nevada, in addressing a meeting, had occasion to say that "if the *bold hearted* landless men of San Francisco would work together, and exercise the right of petition and discussion, each of them would, ere long, have a little home for his children." Imagine Judge Turner's consternation on reading in the *Bulletin* the next evening, that he said:—"If the *bald headed* landlords of San Francisco would work together, they would all of them, ere long, have a little more land for their children!"

☞ A recent law suit has called into notice the fact that the right in a name used as a trade-mark continues in force as long as the article is manufactured by the person first using it, or his heirs.

SATURDAY EVENING POST.

PHILADELPHIA, SATURDAY, JAN'RY 11, 1868.

NOTICE.—We do not return rejected manuscripts, unless they come from our regular correspondents. Any postage stamps sent for such return will be confiscated. We will not be responsible for the safe keeping or return of any manuscript.

THE SEWING MACHINE PREMIUM.—It affords us much gratification to know how often our offer of a Sewing Machine Premium is taken advantage of in the interests of those who absolutely need a sewing machine for their daily business, and would find it difficult to procure one in any other way. A letter now before us from a gentleman in New Castle, Penn., says:—"Had it not been for getting up a Premium list, the lady in question most certainly could not have procured one. Hoping that your excellent paper and magazine may continue to do the good they have done, and that you will still continue your excellent premiums, I remain yours truly."

This is but one case among many. And in every case we have heard from this season, the Machine itself has given great satisfaction. In fact, it could not be otherwise—for there are no better machines than Wheeler & Wilson's manufactured. They took the highest Premium at the Paris Exhibition.

DICKENS'S READINGS.

Mr. Dickens commences next week his first course of readings in Philadelphia. Of course everybody is anxious to hear him—a thing which seems to be difficult for *everybody* to accomplish. We trust Mr. Dickens will repeat his readings in the large cities, until the greater portion of his admirers have had the opportunity of seeing and listening to him at least once.

As a financial speculation, these readings bid fair to be something quite lucrative. But no thinking man will grudge the author his good fortune. Here is perhaps the finest and most original intellect, in the department of literature, that the century has produced. And yet his earnings will not surpass, perhaps not approach, those of many a fortunate army contractor, or speculator in stocks, or actor, or singer, or dancer. Certainly, no one man in this generation has done more to promote the happiness of his fellow beings than Charles Dickens.

THE HOME WEEKLY.

This periodical has passed from the control of Mr. G. W. Childs into that of Mr. Jos. A. Nunes. It has been changed into the quarto form, and presents a very pretty appearance. We wish Mr. Nunes all success in his new vocation, and welcome him into the editorial body.

☞ Mother Goose still finds an enormous sale in this country—upward of 300,000 copies being disposed of every year for twenty-five cents each.

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

CLAUDIA. A NOVEL. By AMANDA M. DOUGLAS, author of "In Trust," "Stephen Dane," etc. Boston: Lee & Shepard. For sale by G. W. Pitcher, Philada.

We have always admired Miss Douglas's charming pictures of domestic life, but in Claudia she has excelled herself, and struck a vein of purest gold.

The book is in two parts, the first being the story of a year; the second, the story of a summer. The first part is a series of dazzling word pictures—the last part, a slow, sad strain, in which occasionally the ear is thrilled by a joy-note which anticipates the triumphant conclusion.

In the heroine and her sister are illustrated the extremes of the spiritual and material natures. Claudia, the child of a Puritan mother, is grand and complete as an incarnation of strength of soul and purity of thought and intention. Her immolation of self on the altar of that capricious and most heathen goddess, Rose, is what one would expect of such a woman. And this is Rose's reason for accepting it—"Because, Claudia, *you* have something besides your heart, and I am *only a woman*."

"Only a woman" is this daughter of a Greek mother, but no being of common flesh and blood. A creature of impulse, born only for summer and the sunshine, for all sweet sounds and pleasant sights—a lissom nymph, a bewildering, tricksy, soulless sprite. To read of her is like drinking champagne. Here she is—"Slender, yet not precisely what you would call small; moulded in the fashion of a Greek nymph, from her golden-crowned head to her restless, dancing foot, tiny and perfect as Cinderella's, albeit she never sat in the ashes. Her complexion was wonderful in its transparency and lovely tints—*pink, pearl* and *frost-white*; blushing, susceptible, changing with every thought.... Large-lidded eyes, full of a subtle, dreamy light.... Her forehead was low and broad, its crowning glory that fine, soft, silken hair of *dun-gold, whose reflexes floated forever in sunshine*. Across the top of the head it was a mass of waves breaking into ringlets....it seemed to be endowed with an individual life of its own....a liberty to dazzle you almost blind, *to cluster in tormenting tenderness*. You longed to bury your fingers in it, to lay your cheek against it, and I am not sure but there could have been found in the world men wild enough to luxuriate in kissing it."

As the author says, the story is "exceptional"—but "It is with the exceptional events of life that story writers have to deal." Miss Douglas has certainly given to the world a most fascinating story, and having read it ourselves, we would say to each and all, "Go and do likewise."

THE NEW LEDGER BUILDING. This is a pamphlet containing a full account of the dedication of the new Ledger Building, and a handsome engraving of that imposing structure. The speeches at the great Banquet at the Continental Hotel are also given, and the numerous letters from President Johnson, Secretaries Seward, Stanton and Welles, General Grant, Professor Longfellow, and a host of other distinguished gentlemen, to the enterprising publisher, Mr. Childs. It is stated that upwards of 75,000 persons visited the building during the three days it was open for inspection. May the Ledger prosper, until, say about the year 1900, it shall require another building, as large as three of the present one; and may Mr. Childs be alive and hearty, to inaugurate the new edifice with still more imposing ceremonies—not forgetting, of course, an even more elegant and sumptuous banquet.

NICHOLAS NICKLEBY. By CHARLES DICKENS. Published by D. Appleton & Co., New York; and also for sale by D. Ashmead, Phila. Price 35 cents.

CHRISTMAS STORIES. By CHARLES DICKENS. Published by T. B. Peterson & Bros., Phila. Price 25 cents.

DOMBEY AND SON. By CHARLES DICKENS. Published by T. B. Peterson & Bros., Phila. Price 25 cents.

RED CROSS; OR, YOUNG AMERICA IN ENGLAND AND WALES. A Story of Travel and Adventure. By OLIVER OPTIC. Published by Lee & Shepard, Boston; and also for sale by G. W. Pitcher, Phila.

CHRISTMAS STORIES. By CHARLES DICKENS. Published by D. Appleton & Co., New York; and also for sale by D. Ashmead, Phila. Price 25 cents.

THORN-FRUIT. A Novel. By CLIFFORD LANIER, of Georgia. Published by Bielock & Co., New York.

VICK'S ILLUSTRATED CATALOGUE AND FLORAL GUIDE for 1868. Published by James Vick, Rochester, New York.

SKETCHES ON THE ICE; OR, THE SKATING MANIA. By HORACE COPE. For sale by Duffield Ashmead, Chestnut street, Phila.

☞ The Court of Appeals at Louisville, Kentucky, has decided that a man has no right to open his wife's letters. In doing so the Court dwells with much fervor upon the "chaste and friendly letters" which a married woman may write and receive, but may not like to show, and in general upon the possibility of sisterly, matronly, or even Platonic correspondence which does not call for conjugal supervision.

☞ The net profits of the Paris Exhibition amount to over three millions of francs, which, according to the original agreement, would be divided in equal portions between the government, the city of Paris, and the guarantors.

☞ The Germans, it is stated, are beginning to print their books in Roman type. It is found much clearer and less trying to the eyes than the German characters.

☞ On Wednesday night, a Miss Lozier, of Jersey City, in attempting to extinguish a kerosene lamp by blowing down the chimney, caused an explosion, and was so badly burned, that, after living in great agony, she died on Thursday.

☞ Judge Griswold, residing in Western Missouri, was stopped by highwaymen and compelled to give up his pocket-book. He asked the thieves to leave those papers which were of no use to them, and they did so, handing him back at the same time twenty-five cents, telling him to keep it for beer money.

☞ Swindlers in Montana plate copper dust with gold, mix it with a small quantity of good gold and sell it for pure. It resists acids like the genuine article, and cannot be detected by the test of weight.

GRAND OPERA.

Splendid Combination of Companies.

We call the attention of our readers in this city and neighborhood, to what will doubtless prove the finest operatic performances we have ever had in Philadelphia.

Three separate companies have been united to give one splendid series of entertainments.

MAX MARETZEK'S
GRAND ITALIAN OPERA COMPANY
ENTIRE!
LAFAYETTE HARRISON'S
GRAND CONCERT AND ORATORIO COMPANY ENTIRE!
LEONARD GROVER'S
GRAND GERMAN OPERA!
THE COMBINED GRAND CHORUSES
AND
THE COMBINED GRAND ORCHESTRAS!

The above great combination presents the following unequalled array of

ARTISTES:

MADAMES PAREPA ROSA, GAZZANIGA, RONCONI, HAUCK, TESTA, and RICARDI.
SIGNORI PANCANI, BARAGLI, HABELMANN, TESTA, RONCONI, BELLINI, ANTONUCCI, HERMANNS, BARILI, BANFI, RICARDI, and DUBREUL.
Messrs. LEOPOLD DE MEYER, CARL ROSA, SIMPSON, and THOMAS.
Conductors, MAX MARETZEK, CARL BERGMAN, and G. W. COLBY.

The performances are to commence on Monday, with

IL TROVATORE—

the leading parts of which will be taken by MME. PAREPA ROSA, MME. TESTA, and SIGNOR PANCANI, SIGNOR BELLINI.

On TUESDAY EVENING, Jan. 7, 1868, At 8 P. M.,

DON GIOVANNI.

Grand Opera by Mozart, presented with its memorable cast,
Mesdames PAREPA ROSA, HAUCK, TESTA; Signori RONCONI, BELLINI, ANTONUCCI and BARAGLI in the principal roles.

WEDNESDAY—Debut of the renowned Dramatic Prima Donna,
MADAME MARIETTA GAZZANIGA,
Her first appearance in Grand Opera in this city since her great triumph at the inaugural of the Academy.

Then will follow

LA FAVORITA,
ROMEO AND JULIET,
CARNIVAL DE VENICE,
OTHELLO,
DON BUCEFALO,
L'AFRICAINE,
LES HUGUENOTS,
LA TRAVIATA.
FAUST (IN GERMAN.)
ROBERTO.

For the order in which these and others will appear, consult the daily papers. There will be in all twelve evening performances, and one matinee. Season tickets for the *thirteen* performances,

ONLY TWELVE DOLLARS!

Alternate tickets, secured seats, commencing on either the first or second night, six performances,

SIX DOLLARS.

Secured seats for single performances, $1,50. Tickets procured at Trumpler's Music Store, 926 Chestnut Street.

UNLEAVENED BREAD AGAIN.

FOR THE SATURDAY EVENING POST.

MR. EDITOR:—Seeing an article in a late number of your paper on the above "bread question," prompts me to offer my mite of knowledge and experience in this important department of human needs.

From my earliest recollection I have been in the habit of using some unleavened bread, but until within a few years never thought of using wheat in this manner.

Now, most of the bread of our family is made in the following simple manner:—We take coarse ground unbolted and unsifted wheat meal and cold water—colder the better—and nothing else, not even salt, mix them quick with a spoon in a deep dish or pitcher to a stiff batter, just so it will pour; we then fill up the pans and put them into the stove oven when it is quite hot, and bake for twenty minutes or so, or until they are of a light brown. The pans are small, holding a spoonful or more, of different shapes, and cast together in clusters of a dozen. I cannot say whether the form of the pan has anything to do with it, but I never could make good unleavened bread in mass or loaves, or in fact in any other shape.

I know people generally prefer salt, but try it a few times without, especially if you have good butter, pretty well salted. Salt seems to destroy, or at least injure the rich taste of the wheat, and I should now just about as soon think of salting hickory nuts to improve their flavor as to salt my bread.

No doubt the best wheat meal is generally ground upon a hand mill, steel or iron, but I get very good ground upon stones. I tell the miller I do not want it *mashed*, like grinding for flour, but *cut*, ground *round*, on sharp corn millstones.

By-the-way, most of our food is too soft, too impalpable, making it pasty or slimy in the stomach, and causing it to adhere or pack, which brings on a legion of evils, among which flatulency and costiveness stand conspicuous.

The stomach is the citadel or fountain of life, and if that is at all times in a healthy condition, it is difficult to get sick, but when it is diseased, we are never well. Yours truly,

Hamilton, Ill. H. B.

☞ Baron Rothschild, of Paris, has cut off, since November 1, the extra allowance of fifty centimes a day he formerly paid his one hundred clerks, so that they might breakfast at the counting-house. The Baron gives as a reason for the act that the "times are too hard."

☞ Some time ago a cow ran in front of a train in Indiana, threw it from the track, and caused the injury of several persons. The railroad company sued the owner of the cow and recovered $4,000 damages. The Supreme Court of the state has affirmed the verdict on an appeal.

☞ The St. Augustine (Florida) papers now being received, speak most pleasantly of "the oranges now hanging in rich clusters from the trees."

☞ Pork was once two cents a pound in Illinois, and beef one cent.

THE SERPENT.

BY JEAN INGELOW.

I have a brother who is a midshipman.

That announcement is easily made, and to sisters who are not in similar case it is of no particular signification, but to those who are, it suggests a great deal. For midshipmen, like other boys, come home sometimes to cheer the hearts of their relatives; and how they spend their time when enjoying these visits, is well known to the initiated, but the world in general can form but a meagre notion of it.

A midshipman, when he comes home, soon makes his family feel that no part of the house, inside or outside, is inaccessible to him; windows are handier things than doors to come in at, if one may judge by his habits; there is no tree, in the topmost branch of which he will not sit cross-legged, cracking filberts; there is no rook's nest, however high, that he has not poked his fingers into; poplars are a joke to him, and he makes no more of oaks and chestnuts than he does of haystacks.

Other boys are contented to sit on chairs and eat their lunch in the dining-room, but a midshipman loves to eat up aloft, and carries his provisions, sometimes plate, glass, and all, to the top of the green-house, where, strange to say, he never breaks the glass; or to the top of the pigeon-house, which is a very handy place, because of the weathercock upon which he can hang his cap and jacket.

He comes in, smelling of smoke, and presents you with some sooty young jackdaws, which he has just got out of the top of the chimney.

He spends a sovereign in rope, such as boxes are corded with; it comes home from the shop in a cart; some of it he makes into rope ladders, and runs up and down them like a squirrel; other lengths are twisted into cats'-cradles up in the trees, or festooned from one to the other, and upon these he disports himself and travels audaciously from tree to tree without touching the *deck*. Oh that the country could conveniently be served without so much agility and such marvelous powers of swarming!

Finally, he goes away again upon his country's service, and his relatives have the comfort of knowing that, whatever he may have done at home, the feats he is performing, perhaps at that very moment, in the rigging of the ——, make his other feats nothing, and not worth mentioning.

The best receipt that I know of, for keeping a midshipman on *terra firma*, is to tell him a story. Under favorable circumstances I have known this to succeed for two or three hours together, if it is done in the open air and among newly-cut hay; the lines of hay, I suppose, remind them of waves! for certain it is that I have never known a midshipman run off over these lines, and I have tried the experiment several times, and on more than one of these generally refractory subjects.

Sometimes my brother could be drawn into relating a story himself: some adventure that he had met with, or some wonderful thing that he had seen; for this said midshipman, though scarcely yet fourteen years of age, has visited every quarter of the globe, and known both shipwreck and tornado.

Once he told me such a curious story, showing the value of presence of mind, that I wrote it down shortly afterwards, and I now offer it to you, divested of nearly all the language of the sea; its interest partly depends, in my mind, upon the fact, that but for this singular presence of mind he probably would not have lived to tell it.

"I suppose you have heard of Cumano?" he began; ignorance on such subjects as terrestrial magnetism, navigation, and the internal arrangements of a ship seeming to his mind inconsistent with knowledge on any other points.

"How can you ask such a question?" I answered. "Yes, of course I have, and I have read an account of it in Humboldt; it is a town in the northern part of South America."

"Oh, well, I thought you might not know about it; at least, I thought you might not know about the experiments that have been made there; about the *variations*, and all that." He then added something about a volcanic country, and the "inclination," and the "dip," and I thought I would not commit myself, so I merely said that I had read Sir John Ross's book, and how he went in search of the magnetic poles.

"Oh well," he answered, "then I needn't explain it to you. I did tell you that we lay off Cumano for some time, and that we were sent up the country to that convent on the mountain; Talbot, and Owen, and I, were sent with the second and third lieutenants and the doctor, to the heights above Cumano, with the chronometers and the instruments."

"Was it a long journey?" I inquired.

"No, not long, only difficult; it took several days. You cannot think what an extraordinary shore there is to that part of South America. When the tide goes out, it uncovers acres of trees; their stems and lower branches are thickly incrusted with slimy mud, and yet they live and grow in the salt water. They are mangroves, and have great, flapping, fleshy leaves, almost as thick as a person's hand. You never saw such unwholesome-looking trees; they steam with the heat, till the mud is dry and caked upon them, and then the tide comes up and wets it again.

"We travelled up the country on mules; it was intensely hot, and so steep, when once we began to ascend the mountain, that I should no more have thought the mules could climb up with us, than I should have expected them to get up to the mast-head, and yet they did contrive it, and took up the instruments too. Where there no trees for shelter, the country was nothing but dead grass, dust, and rents cracked in the ground—some of these rents were three feet across, and had lizards hiding in them, and crayfish—but under the shade of the forest everything dripped with moisture, and we were so wet when we came out, that our clothes and the mules steamed visibly, but the sun soon dried it up.

"We spent three days at the convent on the mountain, and the monks were very kind to us, and tried to teach us some of their Spanish words. I used to think that monks were dark, dignified fellows, solemn, and rather silent; but these monks were very greasy ones! and they had such dirty hands and gowns, that I've no doubt soap must be very hard to get, up there, and water too.

"There could not be a stranger place than that convent. It was built on a flat piece of land, at the top of the mountain, and about as large as this field (four acres;) on three sides there was a precipice, and if you walked to the edge you could see the trees growing below, and the apes springing about upon them. On the fourth side you could drop stones into a tarn or lake, a thousand feet below you, and yet almost overhanging this lake is the path downward.

"You would hardly call it a path at all. Imagine the steepest descent, down which it would be possible to slide without danger of tumbling head foremost, and then imagine that upon it was built a wall thirty or forty feet high, and that the path was the top of the wall, and you will have a very good notion of what it was like."

"But do you mean that there really was a wall?" I inquired.

"Oh, no; but I mean that up great part of that side of the mountain runs a sort of spine of rock, scarcely wide enough in some places for two mules to walk upon abreast; it is flat at the top, and bare of trees. The mountain itself is covered with such dense forest that you can imagine nothing like it here; in some parts the 'spine' is higher than the forest, and you look down on the tops of trees; in others, they reach above it and overshadow it.

"Well, we three youngsters were left with the old monks for a day after the rest of the party were gone down again; and then we set off, Talbot, and Owen, and I, with two Indians, and two of the fattest of the old monks, who seemed so infirm that it was surprising to see how well they rode. It was the most piping hot morning, and the stillest that you can imagine, when we rode out at the court-yard of the convent. We thought we never were to begin the descent; those monks were so afraid we should be playing some tricks, or getting ourselves hurt for want of care, that they all collected round us, shaking their heads at us, and, with the greatest gravity, trying to let us understand that we ought to be grave and serious, as if we had not come up the very same path. However, I must say, it's ten times easier getting up than going down, and it was very kind of the old fellows to be sorry to part with us, for we led them such a life while we were there: in fact, our clambering about really frightened them out of their wits.

"So off we set, and at first we made scarcely any way; the mules are cunning creatures, and would not go a step faster for coaxing or whipping; they stepped along the spine as daintily as a lady who is afraid of wetting her feet, first a little to one side, then to the other, so that I could have thrown my cap down right into the water if I had liked, and I would have done, only one of the monks, when we frightened him, used to heave up such deep groans, that we all knew how thankful he would be when we were safe out of his hands.

"There are two forests there, one above the other; first, there are the trees with branches like our oaks and elms, only covered with flowers, large white, yellow, and scarlet blossoms; great creepers twine over them: they are like cables, only green and hairy, and here and there bursting out with queer flowers, some like wax globes, some like tufts of feathers, others all thick and powdery, with red pollen strewing the ground beneath, and others dripping honey. This was the under forest, out of it sprang tall trunks, bare, like masts, and spread out their tops just like umbrellas held out to shade the under trees from the sun.

"We were nearly an hour going down the first thousand feet to the lake; after that, the way was not so steep, and the spine of rock was lower, for the trees of the upper forest overshadowed us. Nothing seemed to live in them; but the under forest perfectly swarmed with monkeys, squirrels, lizards, yellow snakes, birds, and butterflies. You can't think what a noise and fuss was going on there; it was perfectly stunning. First we would come to a whole flock of blue parrots with rose-colored topknots; they were tearing to pieces a quantity of white, fleshy flowers with their strong beaks, and feeding on a yellow seed that was in them. Sometimes the way was perfectly white with these flowers, and not one was left on the tree, while the birds sat on the boughs absolutely panting with the toil of tearing them up. Next we would come to a whole tribe of little monkeys, screaming, and squalling, and boxing one another's ears, and altogether making such a distraction that the cockpit, when we are all making as much noise as we possibly can, is nothing to it."

This I thought was saying a good deal for the powers of the monkeys, and so I intimated to my brother.

"Ah, wait till you hear those monkeys," was his reply; "in the hardest gale that ever blew, when the canvas was tearing and the spars splitting, I'll engage to say they would have been heard as clearly as in a calm.

"But the noise subsided as it became hotter, and at noonday there was not a sound in the forest; and it was droll to see the cockatoos hanging to the branches by their beaks, just like game in a shop, and with the white film half drawn over their eyes, showing as plainly as possible that they were so hot that they did not know what to do with themselves.

"At noon we came into a sort of bower in a level place; it was perfectly overhung, and the trees were so matted and laced up with the creepers, that not an inch of sky could be seen nor a waft of air felt; drops of water fell from the leaves, and a warm steam rose from everything. But there was a perfect shade, and as there was abundant room for us all to sit down and rest and unsaddle the mules, we did all we could to persuade the monks to rest there. Besides, we were hungry, and we kept putting our fingers to our mouths, and telling as well as we could that we wanted something to eat; but they shook their heads and made us understand that this place was infested with snakes.

"We looked out from under the trees, and there again in the glare of the sunbeam was the spine of rock, now winding downwards almost across the mountain; the heat striking up from it made our eyes burn and our heads ache; but it was not very steep now, and it was nearly as broad as the turnpike roads here, so that I could have got down by the help of my hand and the plants. So off we set again; and now, as there was no danger, we went as we liked, and I led the way.

"I noticed a great lump of something lying in the path; it was as big as a calf, of a grey color, and spotted with white; if I thought about it at all I supposed it was a stone. I never absolutely looked at it till we were within one pace of it, then my eyes seemed drawn to it, and fixed upon it. It was a serpent. The mule sprung back and snorted; her eyes looked as if they would start from her head.

"There she lay, the odious thing, sleek and fat, all coiled up and knotted, and her little eyes leering at me with a horrid sort of deceitful smile in them. It could not have been more than one moment that I sat gaping at her, but it seemed a year, and then the mule cried out almost like a human creature, and turned round and tore up again past the other mules, straining and stumbling, and still uttering that fearful cry, till in two or three minutes we were up again in that level place; and I turned and saw all the other mules but one tearing up the ascent, and poor little Owen straining up on foot.

"There was dust in the road—first I saw only that—then in the twinkling of an eye I saw Owen's mule creeping up slowly, and my first thought was wonder where the serpent could be; and my next wonder at the tremendously long tail that this mule was trailing after her. In another instant this tail was reared up and brandished over her back, and she was sprawling on the road; and the tail was that great serpent. Directly the serpent and the mule were rolled up together into one mass, and rocking from side to side, and writhing and struggling. At last—the wretched mule kicking still—they both fell together over the edge of the precipice, and went plump into the top of a tree, and while we sat quaking and looking on, they crashed down from thence, and rolled among the ferns and canes, and were lost.

"It was a horrid sight; and when I got over my surprise a little, I found we had all dismounted, and that Owen was standing wringing his hands and crying with all his might; and then, after that, he stopped and burst out laughing till he made himself cry again.

"Of course we did not like those old monks to see an English boy crying, and we kept patting him on the back and talking to him. At last he seemed to wake up all on a sudden and begin to look about him.

"'Well, old fellow,' Talbot said to him, 'how are you now?'

"'Oh,' he said, 'I'm all right. What are we waiting for?'

"But presently he remembered all about it. He was last, it seems, and as each mule came up to the serpent, it shied and dashed up the ascent, but his mule actually put her foot into the middle of the creature, slid it down among the sleek folds, and at once seemed paralyzed, and never stirred, but kept gazing at the thing as it uncurled itself and began to hiss softly.

"Owen said he did not remember how he got off, nor anything else, till he found us all shaking him, and telling him that he was quite safe; and he kept shivering and crying out, while he described the serpent's eyes, 'Oh, the hissing monster! I hate her—I do hate her!' And, do you know, it has seemed to me rather shocking ever since, that instead of feeling thankful that we were all safe, I could think of nothing but that text in the Bible about Haman!"

"What text, my dear boy?" I asked him.

"Why that account of how Haman came home and told his wife about his riches and his honors, and the distinctions that the king had conferred upon him, and then ended by saying, 'But all this avails me nothing so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting in the king's gate.'"

"I cannot see any connection between the text and the serpent," I observed; "how came you to think of such a subject?"

"It flashed into my mind directly, and I thought to myself, what is the good of having this world to live in, if such odious reptiles as this are to share it with us. How I did loathe that serpent; it quite curdles my blood even now when I think of her!"

"I have often heard people speak of that peculiar hatred," I replied, "and refer it to the enmity that God placed between the serpent and the seed of the woman."

"Yes; so the chaplain told us afterwards. I have often heard lions and tigers roar, when I have been keeping the middle watch, and have felt a good deal of fear, and a sort of respect for them, but no disgust. It was grand in the dark to listen; it made one think, Oh, you jolly old fellow, I'm glad you're not crunching *my* bones! But when you have once heard a serpent hiss, and seen his sleek body and the hideous leer in his eyes, it does not seem enough to have escaped; only to have looked at him sometimes makes you feel ill for days afterwards with disgust and fear.

"But I was going to tell you what a brave thing Talbot did; as long as I live I shall always think it was the bravest thing that could be, and I shall respect him as much as any grown-up man, though he is only two years older than I am.

"I told you that we had all dismounted in that shady place; the mules were standing huddled together, but we were in no fear of the serpent, for we knew she would not quit her prey; so we all sat down, and the kind old monks broke off some branches, and we all began to fan ourselves with them, while they got out some provisions. There was a sort of patty, made of the flesh of iguanas—very nice those creatures are, I can tell you—and then there was some cake of Indian corn, and some baked parrots; but just as we put the very first mouthful into our mouths, Talbot started up as if he was perfectly astonished, and said to us, 'Why, youngsters, we shall never be on board ship by sundown if we stop to rest here, and you know what our orders were;' and in an instant he threw down his cassava and bread, and began to saddle one of the mules again with all his might. We were extremely surprised; we did not know that the order had been at all urgent. The monks too were surprised; they rose with many bows, and as plainly as possible let him understand that it was their wish and intention to rest. But the more they said, the faster Talbot saddled. Their bows and politeness changed to anger, and still the saddles went on; they thought he could not understand, but *they* understood that he was perfectly bent upon setting off again forthwith; and boy as he was, they did not seem to know what to do to prevent it. We were rather sullen at being so disturbed; but Talbot's manner and determination so amazed us, that when he ordered Owen to get up and mount, the poor little fellow obeyed instantly. Talbot struck the mule with a whip, and off she set down the spine. 'Now then,' he said to me, 'up with you, T——, your mule's ready.' He was trembling with hurry and impatience. 'No,' I said, 'it suits me to wait a little longer.' I shall never forget his face then, it seemed to express so many things—terror, entreaty, and determination. 'I've no time to wait,' he said, 'but if you don't mount this instant, T——, I *must* strike you.' He was far stronger than I, but as he lifted up the whip I knocked up the handle, and it fell. Instantly he turned to the Indians; they obeyed him, and set off without a word; then the astonished monks, casting melancholy eyes on the provisions, were somehow made to mount. I don't know how he did it; but I suppose they were so amazed at his behavior and his audacity, that they had no sense left to contend; and Talbot gave each mule such a blow at parting, that she set off at full speed.

"And then he turned to me. 'Now then,' he said, 'there is but this one mule left for both of us; mount, and be quick.' I felt that he had no right to command, and I was angry and astonished. I fixed my eyes on him for a moment: his whole face seemed to be changed by his impatience, and worked and quivered with it. I heard the pattering hoofs of the other mules; they were still audible. If I could have known! 'No,' I said to him, 'I WILL NOT go till I have an explanation.'

"'Very well, then,' he answered, 'there it is.' He had already got his hand on my shoulder to urge my mounting; he now turned his eyes towards the most shady and secluded end of the bower, and there—oh, it makes me cold to think of it!—there, on a rock, folded and reposing, lay another serpent, just like the one we had seen before. It was watching us, and bathing its long, slender tongue in a narrow sunbeam. Instead of springing up and setting off for my life, I could not stir, nor breathe, nor get my eyes away from the fearful creature; but Talbot dragged me up by main force, and mounted behind me; and off we set slowly—oh, how slowly!

"We had no whip to urge on the mule with, for I had dropped it when I snatched it from Talbot, and I shall never forget the terrors of the next five minutes. At last the mule caught sight of her companions and mended her pace, and in a few minutes we came to open sward, where only a few trees were scattered here and there.

"When we had found a really safe place where the rock sheltered us, and where there were no crevices in which any creature could hide itself, we all lay down, and Talbot made an apology to the monks; and I contrived to explain to them what he had done.

They were exceedingly delighted with his presence of mind, and kept repeating, *Muschachito mio, Muschachito mio.*"

"Talbot told us that he saw the serpent the moment the provisions were served out, and was so frightened at first, that for an instant he thought of springing on to a mule, dashing down the slope again, and then turning round when he was safe, to warn us of our danger. As he really did something so different, I think it was very honorable of him to confess this first intention."

"Yes, indeed," I replied; "and I think he showed wonderful presence of mind and a noble courage."

"I was sure you would say so. He said, that he then considered the confusion and fright we should all be in—rushing this way and that way, some running down on foot, others hindering one another, perhaps frightening the mules, and letting them run away—and you must remember our lives almost depended on those mules; we could not get either up or down the mountain without them; and then you must remember too that Owen, after the fright he had had, was not fit for much. If it had been any other wild animal, of course he would have told us at once; but as it was a serpent, he feared we should be paralyzed; and if not that, get dispersed and fall over the precipice; besides, he hoped at first that it was asleep, and dreaded lest any noise should waken it. As for me, my behavior when he was obliged to show it to me makes me think I should not have escaped. I shall always think that Talbot saved my life, for the serpent was beginning to uncoil himself."

"There can be very little doubt that he did," said I, "and most probably he was asleep when Talbot first saw him, and might have been awoke by the noise you made in quarrelling together.

"We were told afterwards, that these ash-colored serpents are believed always to live in pairs," proceeded my brother, "for when one is killed, another is almost sure to be seen about the same spot."

"I hope after this second escape you did not think of Haman," I observed.

"No, I didn't," said my brother, with a much more thoughtful face than was common with him.

"When you think of the fear and hatred with which you regarded the serpent," I continued, "you should consider that this enmity was implanted because our first parents were tempted to sin, by Satan, under the form of a serpent; and that it is sin which we ought to fear and dread, far more than the serpent, which can inflict no injury, excepting to the body. You should be grateful, too, that the promise given so long ago has been fulfilled by our Redeemer—the promise that 'the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head.'"

"Yes," said my brother, "that was what the ship's chaplain said to us when we came on board."

And so ended my brother's story.

*My brave boy, or, brave fellow.

☞ Kisses, like the faces of philosophers, vary. Some are as hot as a coal of fire, some as sweet as honey, some as milk, some as tasteless as long-drawn soda. Stolen kisses are said to have more nutmeg and cream than any other sort. So saith a Fanny-fernal sister.

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MARRIAGES.

☞ Marriage notices must always be accompanied by a responsible name.

On the 19th of Dec., in the Arch St. Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia, by the Rev. N. W. Conkling, THEODORE F. CHANE, of Delaware, to RETTA, youngest daughter of the late Chas. Stewart, of Cream Ridge, New Jersey.

On the 28th of Nov., by the Rev. Wm. Cathcart, Mr. WILLIAM H. SMITH to Miss SALLIE SMITH, both of this city.

On the 25th of Dec., by the Rev. W. J. Mann, Mr. P. F. WEBER, Esq., to Miss FANNY S. BUADY, both of this city.

On the 26th of Dec., by the Rev. E. W. Hutter, Mr. JESSE K. WHITMAN to Miss ROSELLIA A. CANON, both of this city.

On the 18th of Dec., by the Rev. J. Spencer Kennard, Mr. GEORGE W. MYERS to Miss MARY SHAGNAVER, both of this city.

On the 24th of Dec., by the Rev. Saml. Durborow, Mr. JOSEPH W. FORCE to Miss ANN WILEY, both of this city.

On the 26th of Dec., by the Rev. Alfred Cookman, Mr. WILLIAM H. TRUITT to Miss EMMA A. DEPENDEN, both of this city.

DEATHS.

☞ Notices of Deaths must always be accompanied by a responsible name

On the 20th of Dec., HANNAH, wife of John H. Cavender, aged 78 years.

On the 31st of Dec., Mr. FRANCIS GETZ, in his 42d year.

On the 30th of Dec., WILLIAM J., son of Sarah and the late Saml. Harris, in his 22d year.

On the 27th of Dec., Mrs. ELIZABETH MITCHENER, in her 40th year.

On the 29th of Dec., CHARLES F. MAIOS, in his 24th year.

On the 29th of Dec., JOHN B. MATHER, in his 37th year.

On the 28th of Dec., Capt. WILLIAM BISHOP, in his 69th year.

On the 26th of Dec., Mr. EMANUEL C. PAGE, Sr., in his 81st year.

On the 28th of Dec., MARTHA WILKINSON, in her 49th year.

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST.

NEUTRAL IN POLITICS.

Splendid Inducements for 1868.

The contents of THE POST shall consist as heretofore of the very best original and selected matter. We commenced in the first number of January, a deeply interesting story, called

THE DEATH SHADOW OF THE POPLARS, by Mrs. Margaret Hosmer, author of "The Morrisons," &c.

We shall follow Mrs. Hosmer's story with

TRYING THE WORLD, by Miss Amanda M. Douglas, author of "In Trust," "Claudia," &c., and

ST. GEORGE AND THE DRAGON, by Elizabeth Prescott, author of "How a Woman Had her Way," "A Dead Man's Rule," &c.

Besides our original stories, we give

The *GEMS OF THE ENGLISH MAGAZINES*, and also the *NEWS OF THE WEEK, AGRICULTURAL ARTICLES, WIT AND HUMOR, RIDDLES, THE MARKETS*, &c., &c.

PREMIUMS. Various Premiums, from Pencils to Sewing Machines, including Books, and Silver Plated ware, are given to those getting up Premium Lists. A list of articles, terms, &c., will be sent to any one desirous of getting up a Premium List upon application by letter, inclosing a postage stamp.

The **SEWING MACHINE** Premium. For 20 subscribers at $2.50 apiece—or for 20 subscribers and $60—we will send Wheeler & Wilson's No. 3 Machine, price $65. By remitting the difference of price in cash, any higher priced machine will be sent.

Every subscriber in a Premium list, inasmuch as he pays $2.50, will get the large Premium Steel Engraving of "Washington at Mount Vernon," or "One of Life's Happy Hours," or "Everett in his Library," as he may prefer.

Our **PREMIUM ENGRAVINGS.** For our Premium Engraving this year we shall give the splendid portrait of Washington, engraved from the celebrated picture by Thomas Hicks, N. A. This is a full length portrait, with Mount Vernon in the background, and is thirty inches long by twenty-one inches wide. No American home should be without a portrait of "The Father of his Country." This engraving, or one of "Edward Everett in his Library," or one of last year's premiums, "One of Life's Happy Hours," if preferred, *will be sent gratis as a Premium (postage paid) to every full ($2.50) subscriber, and also to every person sending a club!*

It will *not* be sent to club subscribers, unless they send one dollar extra.

TERMS. Our terms are the same as those of that well known magazine, THE LADY'S FRIEND—in order that the clubs, and the Premium lists, may be made up of the paper and magazine conjointly when so desired—and are as follows:

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Every person getting up either of the above clubs, will receive the Premium Engraving in addition.

☞ Subscribers in British North America must remit *twenty cents* extra as we have to prepay the U. S. postage.

☞ The magazines or papers in a club will be sent to different Post-offices if desired.

☞ The contents of The Post and of The Lady's Friend will always be entirely different.

☞ In remitting, name at the top of your letter, your Post-office, county, and State. If possible, procure a Post-office order on Philadelphia. If a Post-office order cannot be had, get a draft on Philadelphia or New York, *payable to our order.* If a draft cannot be had, send United States notes. Do not send money by the Express Companies, unless you pay their charges.

☞ Specimen numbers of THE POST are sent on receipt of five cents.

Address

HENRY PETERSON & CO.,
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THE GERONOMITE FRIAR.

[The following beautiful lines on Wilkie's conversation with a Geronomite friar, in some Spanish convent, on the picture of the Last Supper, are from Lord Houghton's poems:]

It was a holy usage to record
Upon each Refectory's side or end,
The last mysterious Supper of our Lord,
That meanest appetites might upward tend.

Within the Convent palace of old Spain,
Rich with the gifts and monuments of kings,
Hung such a picture, said by some to reign
The sovereign glory of those wondrous things.

A painter of far fame, in deep delight,
Dwelt on each beauty he so well discerned,
While, in low tones, a grey Geronomite
This answer to his ecstacy returned—

"Stranger! I have received my daily meal
In this good company now three-score years,
And thou, whoe'er thou art, can'st hardly feel
How time these lifeless images endears.

"Lifeless—ah, no! both Faith and Art have given
That passing hour a life of endless rest,
And every soul who loves the food of Heaven
May to that table come a welcome guest.

"Lifeless—ah, no! while in mine heart are stored
Sad memories of my brethren dead and gone,
Familiar places vacant round *our* board,
And still *that* silent Supper lasting on;

"While I review my youth—what I was then—
What I am now, and ye, beloved ones all!
It seems as if *these* were the living men,
And *we* the colored shadows on the wall."

☞ It is very noticeable that people who have a vocation rarely have an occupation.

THE OLD YEAR AND THE NEW.

He is dying—the Old Year,
In the winter and the snow,
On his brow the wreath is sere,
And his steps are faint and slow.
Let him rest, let him rest,
For the sun is in the west;
On the earth's snow-mantled breast
Let him rest.

He is weary of our earth,
Peace to him—his work is done;
We shall hail the New Year's birth
Ere another morning's sun.
Pass away, pass away,
Let the old and wrong decay;
With the sorrows of to-day
Pass away!

Take with thee thy fleeting light,
Take the shadows of the past;
Of the years of grief and night,
Dying Year! be thou the last.
Let it die, let it die,
All the wrong beneath the sky;
God hath spoken from on high,
Let it die!

Pass away, O time of sin!
Evil years of pain and grief;
Let the Kingdom enter in
That shall bring the world relief.
Soon or late, soon or late
It shall come to all who wait;
Earth shall reach a better fate
Soon or late!

Come, O New Year, crowned to-night;
Come, O monarch, young and strong;
Help the triumph of the right;
Help the conquest of the wrong;
Hail to thee—hail to thee,
In thy hopeful smile we see
Promised peace and liberty—
Hail to thee!

Bring our weary, waiting earth
Near the jubilee-release;
Bring the hearts that wait its birth
Nearer to the years of peace.
Enter in, enter in,
Earth shall yet her freedom win—
Day of promise, O! begin;
Enter in!

ONE OF THE FAMILY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LOST SIR MASSINGBERD," "CARLTON'S YEAR," &c.

CHAPTER XVII.

"THE YEARS, THE YEARS THEY GLIDE AWAY."

Seventeen years have passed away since the date of our last chapter, and with them almost an entire generation. The mountains about Sandalthwaite, the lake, the canopy of heaven, remain the same, but how different the eyes that look upon them! The unchangeable beauty of nature has something of unmercifulness about it, and even of cruelty. How terrible it would be if a woman, whom we loved in youth, should keep the beauty year after year that once so ravished, while we grow old and cold! What a shocking spectacle must Ninon de l'Enclos, in her seventieth year, but yet in the fullness of her charms, have afforded to her contemporaries! In those dull Memoirs of Madame de Genlis, there is a story of a man who fell in love with three generations of women: in the heyday of life, he wooed a lovely damsel, who married another man; then wooed her daughter with similar ill success; and eventually married the grandchild. That could scarcely have been an alliance of the affections, but it was surely better than if he had wedded his first love, and she had kept her youthful good looks to the last. In coming upon some scene where man has been busy of late years planting or building, we often hear some ancient observe: "I knew this place when there was not a tree, or a roof" (as the case may be) "to be seen." But there is infinitely more pathos, to aged eyes, in a place where nothing of external nature has changed since they looked upon it half a century ago. It is strange if remembrance does not touch them, then, even to tears, although the old are rarely moved to weep: not the recollection of any event, perchance, that may have happened in that very place so long ago, but the thought of what they were, and the involuntary comparison it suggests with what they are.

Upon them, however, who remain in the same unchanging spot for their lives long, such thoughts, happily for themselves, do not intrude. Not one, I think, of our old friends at Sandalthwaite, for instance, was seriously affected by them, after the lapse of time I speak of. Mr. Wilson had, it is true, exchanged his advanced middle age to very near the threescore years and ten which have been described as the limit of man's life; but that was by no means the case in the wholesome Cumberland village, where many a man of eighty, and even beyond it, was hale and hearty yet, and even did some work about the changeless fells, where he had strayed in childhood. Every day had brought its accustomed duties to the good pastor, and he was scarcely conscious of the flight of time: all that he knew about it was, that in his later years his cup of blessings had been fullest, with his simple, comely wife to tend and love him, and his beautiful daughter Lucy to be loved and tended. He is by half-a-dozen years the senior of Dr. Warton, but that professor of the science of health has failed to preserve himself from the ravages of time so well as Mr. Wilson, who, except that his white locks are thinned, and a certain venerableness—the halo of a well-spent life—has settled upon his benignant features, looks much the same as ever to that flock, the majority of which he has both christened and united in wedlock (for, at Sandalthwaite, men do not go far afield to choose their wives) with his own hands. But the doctor, although still carrying his huge frame tolerably upright, is not the man he was. His eyes are become lustreless, and his face has fallen in, and his hands tremble as with the palsy, until he has set himself right, as he calls it, with strong drink. Disinclined as the good folks his neighbors are for change, there is even talk of getting another doctor at Sandalthwaite, who may be relied upon to do his duty at all times, which is certainly not the case with Herbert Warton. Not only, however, has his practice hitherto not fallen off (since there was no one else to take it,) but it has been remarked of late years that the doctor has not wanted for money. There must certainly be some antiseptic qualities about good brains which prevent their possessor succumbing so easily as the dullards to decay, for, considering the doctor's age and habits, it is wonderful that he is still alive; whereas Miles Ripson, who is more than twenty years his junior, and only just beginning middle life, exhibits many of the signs of a premature old age. He still resides at the Nook, but the farm is in the hands of others, and he has nothing whatever, it is said, to do with its receipts; nay, he has actually returned to his old employment in the wad-mine, a thing not to be wondered at in itself, since his dissolute habits have left him almost penniless (notwithstanding assistance again and again received, thanks to his wife, from the mistress of Dewbank Hall,) but very strange when we consider that he works as a common miner under his old rival, George Adams, who is now head manager at the wad-hole.

Mary Ripson, though a matron of eight-and-thirty, looks in better case than when we saw her last, even putting her then interesting condition out of the question. The cause of this alteration for the better began, singularly enough, in the loss of her first and only child; for when it was considered inexpedient that Mrs. Woodford should nurse the young squire, the services of Mary were called in to perform that office, the infant being for the time transferred to the farm; and afterwards its foster-mother took up her residence at the Hall, which even now is at least as much her home as Ander Nook. Good food and care, and still more enfranchisement from her drunken husband's rule, soon produced their effect, and the relics of her good looks thus restored, she still retains. Although she and her husband are not on the best of terms, he no longer ill-treats her; and she has been permitted to supply the place of the library of romantic fiction which that worse than Saracen once threw behind the fire. Whether any affection for her first love still smoulders within her, none can tell; but the darling of her heart, to all outward seeming, is young Bentinck Woodford, (so named by his father in compliment to his wife's late parent, Captain Bentinck Morke,) a lad of seventeen, but whose stalwart form and hirsute lip give him the appearance of a man of five-and-twenty. This young gentleman repays the affection of his foster-mother by his occasional presence at Ander, but it is whispered that he goes there rather for the purpose of drinking with her husband, than from any sentimental gratitude to Mrs. Ripson. Sentiment, perhaps, was scarcely to be expected in the offspring of Ernest Woodford and his wife, but there is, unhappily, not even propriety. Youth, for the present, is in his favor, and if a face without intelligence can be said to be possessed of beauty, Bentinck Woodford is splendidly handsome. There, however, the list of his attractions abruptly ends. Fond of low company, he would not only be present, if permitted, at *every wrestling-ring in Cumberland*, but, sinking *his social position* like another Nero, would himself compete for the belts in the arena; nay, worse than all, would take the chair at the public-house, and preside at the gross festivities that close the day—a Tony Lumpkin without his humor.

No wonder that Ernest Woodford, finding himself the father of such a son, and of no other, should have grown to look worn and aged. He had never had the appearance of a young man, even when he really was so, but he now looked like some malevolent gnome just escaped after five hundred years of imprisonment in his own wad-mine; his dark face, like that of some ebony god from a Chinese joss-house, was slashed in a hundred grotesque and ghastly wrinkles; his hair, which for years has been as white as snow, is growing very scant; and his voice, always shrill and dissonant, had acquired the peevish treble of an octogenarian. But neither years nor sorrow had had power to bow him; his tough sinews did their work, albeit with but little elasticity. His frame was still erect, and his will was as inflexible as of old, though he did not always have his way. So few people do in this world—except some emperor, perhaps, who has to pay for it by standing pistol-fire at irregular intervals—that we may broadly say, "Nobody gets it."

Mrs. Woodford is also greatly aged since we last saw her; years have affected her as they have her husband, and as they affect most men and women, by intensifying her characteristics. When the divines tell us to repent while there is yet time, there is another reason for their importunity besides that death gapes for us at every footfall: the older we grow, the more difficult it is for us to change, not only our habits, but our ways of thought. The old saying of the Romanist when placed under the hydraulic-press of royal persuasion that he should change his religion: "Sire, in this faith I was born, in this faith I have lived all my life, and in this faith I do prefer to die," is the reply that the great majority of middle-aged people are prone to make, if not to their queriers, to themselves. While we are still young, our minds are open to impressions, and occasions can be improved to our intellectual and spiritual advantage, notwithstanding that the end seems so far off, and the cutting short of our days so unlikely a contingency; but by the time we are really drawing near to the grave's mouth, when not even the most favorable views taken by the actuaries afford us more than half-a-dozen more years of life, our feet very rarely leave the paths they have trodden so long: we have walked to and fro within our little exercise-ground—whether garden, or waste, or prison-yard—with such plodding persistence, that it is worn to a low level, and we are every day more disinclined to make the effort requisite to leave it, and step up on to new ground. The walking may be easier there, perhaps, and may even lead to very splendid prospects, but we had rather be where we are. We have got on pretty well there, upon the whole; and as to its ending in something worse than a quagmire at the very last, let us hope that that is an exaggeration. Few of us are so audacious as to say that it will be time enough *then* to think about turning back; we have simply made up our minds "to risk it," and we generally do so; with what result those only know who unhappily cannot inform us, and it is doubtful whether we should heed them if they could.

Mrs. Woodford was fatter and duller, and more phlegmatic than ever. Her scanty flaxen ringlets, ravished by the rude lover Time, had been replaced by a luxuriant brown front, but the deception was so transparent as to absolve it of every fraudulent intent; her complexion had not altered—for cream-color is a very fast tint—but her pink eyes had grown paler, and what housewives call "washed out." This was not, however, through weeping. Whatever Mrs. Woodford suffered from the indifference of her husband, or the ill-conduct of her son, she kept to herself: no one at Dewbank Hall had ever seen its mistress shed a tear. She scarcely ever originated an observation, and replied to any that were addressed to her in the shortest terms consistent with civility, for her nature was incapable of "snapping you up." She never took in hand anything approaching to a book, except Lingard's *History of England*, which happened to be the title of the backgammon-board at Dewbank Hall; she played for an hour every evening at that old-fashioned game, sometimes with the doctor, but more generally (for he was not so frequent a guest as he used to be) with her niece Evelyn. Mrs. Woodford had always called her by her full title, and never Evy, even when she was a child, all abbreviations of Christian names being abhorrent to her aristocratic mind. Her thin lips would sometimes curl in scorn, when her husband, in rare moments of good-humor with his offspring, called him "Ben." "'Ben' is short for Benjamin, Mr. Woodford," she would remark, looking up from her embroidery, "but I never heard of a Bentinck being so denominated." She was all day long either at her embroidery-frame or pursuing some one of those ephemeral arts which make studios of our drawing-rooms for a season—not oft for two—and then disappear from human ken. They do not descend, like our vices, to the lower classes; there is not enough vitality about them for that; but while they last, they make perfect devotees of women like Clementina Woodford. Berlin-wool work, wax-flower making, tatting, crochet, potichomania, decalcomanie, each in turn had sway over the mistress of Dewbank Hall; but that whose dynasty began with the earliest, and survived them all, was embroidery. The scutcheon of the Ballygaboolies was perpetuated, as far as canvas and wool could do it, all over the house; it faced the fire-screens, it covered the sofa-cushions, it exasperated Mr. Woodford by clinging to his head and shoulders whenever he leaned back in his chair.

Evelyn Sefton had applied herself to all these various arts in turn, to please her aunt; but she was too sensible, as well as too studious, to practise them of her own accord. What *she* did with needle and thread—and she did a good deal—was of a more useful kind. To the children, and especially the infants of the poor, she was a second Dorcas. She was her uncle's almoner; without her intervention, *the parish would have been by much the poorer, and it was not always an easy task to tap the fountain of the Black Squire's charity*; but she had scarcely any money of her own to give away; therefore, it behoved her, as she thought, to do that for others with her hands which she could not do with her purse-strings. And if the love of all the Sandalthwaite folk could repay her for such help as she had to give, Evelyn Sefton had her reward. What a shame it was, said the gossips, that so beautiful a young lady as Miss Evy should have grown to be near eight-and-twenty, and yet not have found a husband! True, there was never a man on earth that was good enough for her, but still it seemed a pity: even an approximation to the impossible male paragon would have been more satisfactory than none at all. It was not in accordance with the fitness of things that Miss Evy should be single: if she had died young, and become an angel, which would scarcely have been any change at all in one so good and fair, they would not have been surprised; the best are often taken first; but that she should eventually turn out an old maid, was incomprehensible. How different it would have been, whispered some of the older folks, had Master Charlie lived! He would have grown up worthy of her. They would have made as pretty a pair as eye could look upon, and as good as heart could wish; but then it was not to be. Unconscious of these well-meant regrets on the part of her poor neighbors, Evelyn Sefton had grown thus far into womanhood without losing any of the beauty of her youth, or, if she had done so, exchanging it for other charms which compensated for its absence. Simple and modest as ever, circumstances had occurred at the Hall, between her uncle and aunt, and in relation to her scapo-grace cousin Bentinck, which had brought out the natural strength and firmness of her character. She was still the favorite of the squire, although his paternal pride prevented him from owning it even to himself; and more singular still, Mrs. Woodford treated her, not affectionately indeed, for warmth of feeling was not in her, but with the same kindness and consideration as though she herself had had no son. The birth of the heir of Sandalthwaite had not destroyed Evelyn's gentle influences, and now that he was growing up, she had become more necessary to her uncle and aunt than ever. Often had she shielded the young scoundrel from the effects of his father's easily roused ire; often had made excuses for his misdeeds, or mitigated their heinousness when excuse there was none; and often had she endeavored to win the lad from his evil ways with a sweet persuasion that brought many a promise from his lips, though its fruit was never seen. Her chief, and indeed only companion was Lucy Wilson, whom we left in her cradle, but who was now a charming damsel of eighteen—a ray of sunshine in the quiet Parsonage, as Evelyn was at the gloomy Hall, but shedding by no means so uniform a light, but an uncertain April brightness, intermitted by willful clouds and wayward showers.

Thus, as we have endeavored briefly to indicate, had the lapse of years affected our friends at Sandalthwaite; and having sketched them so that recognition may be easy, we leave the quiet valley and its indwellers for the present, for other folks and another scene.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A KNIGHT-ERRANT.

There are many worse places in London than the narrow streets in the eastward of Leicester Square, but there are few dirtier or more depressing. A mere low neighborhood only suggests poverty, which excites pity, or crime, which awakens fear; but there is a pretentiousness about the streets I have in my mind that moves one to grim mirth. Literature and art have both established themselves in that quarter, and the drama flourishes in many a fancy-dress and theatrical wig-shop; but all these are on their last legs. The bookstalls are as crowded as elsewhere, but there is an undue proportion of school-books, side by side with those railway novels, the covers of which are but too often brilliant and striking in inverse ratio to their contents. The emporiums of art are numerous, but the chief items of their contents are cheap Chinese dragons, antique Eastern daggers (made at Birmingham,) and labelled with unnecessary precaution "Poisoned," and half-cleaned pictures, representing within a single frame a demi-example of the tea-tray and signboard schools contrasted with one of Rembrandt's.

From these narrow streets, still narrower alleys radiate in all directions, "short-cuts" from the world without, which the ambition of the inhabitants has established into their territory; and at the intersection of these alleys, there are miniature squares, hidden as the central statue in a Maze, and silent except for the occasional echoes of rapid feet—footsteps of people who have lost their way, and are hurrying back again. The houses in these squares are very small and ugly, but they are cheap, and, by comparison with the thoroughfares that surround them, clean. The inhabitants, although scarcely belonging to the liberal professions, follow no trade. A canary or two chirps at the upper windows, and, in the summer, boxes of mignonette adorn the same; but the lower windows are almost always closed, and the blinds pulled half-way down. Evidences of refined taste contrast themselves curiously with a disinclination for the sunshine and fresh air, and suggest the notion of Gentility in Adversity desiring to escape from observation, and without doubt obtaining its object. Even on this April Sabbath, so soft and windless that it seems to be the herald of the summer rather than the Spring, Perdu Square flings up no ground-floor window to welcome it, save one. This one, however, is open to its fullest extent, so that any neighbors (for passengers there are none) who chance to pass it can behold every action of the inmate of the little room.

A fine, broad-shouldered, athletic man, not more in reality than four-and-thirty, but looking a year or two older by reason of his enormous beard and sun-dried face, is seated there at breakfast. He does not give much trouble to the servant of the house, for he has toasted his bread with his own hands, and is now boiling his eggs in a little saucepan over his own fire. His whole appearance gives one assurance of an independent spirit, *accustomed to shift for himself in all things, without very much regard to what people who stand upon their dignity may think of such conduct.* One might almost suppose that he had been his own tailor, so ill-fitting and loose were his garments; and yet they were not such as are sold at the slop-shops, but rather of a foreign and outre make, like those a man wears who has only just arrived in his native land after long travel, and before he has had time to refit; nor were they able to conceal the strength and symmetry of his limbs, which would have been quite remarkable had it not been for the superior attraction of his face. Notwithstanding the huge beard (an appendage which gives a uniform truculence to all ordinary countenances,) and his swarthy and weather-beaten hue, his features were almost feminine in their delicacy of shape; and his eyes, although too thoughtful to be very genial, had that sober tenderness in them, widely different from amorous passion, which bespeaks more certainly than any other outward sign the great and gentle heart. His every movement, even the rising from his seat after his hearty meal, and the stooping of his head beneath the window, as he looked out to assure himself of the character of the weather, showed marvellous ease and power. After apparently having satisfied himself, by this reconnoissance, of the honesty of the day's intentions, he produced from a huge cigar-case, made of dried Pampas-grass, a very large Manilla, lit it, and reaching down a wide-awake hat of portentous dimensions, stepped out into the open air.

That first-cousin to a Spanish sombrero was the only thing that was required to complete its wearer's isolation in London streets, and it would have done so, even had the rest of his appearance consorted better than it did with that of his fellow-countrymen; for the wearing of a silk-hat upon a Sunday is a necessity with every Londoner above the rank of an artisan: he may set conventionality at defiance in more momentous matters; he may refuse to go to church or chapel; he may invite other Sabbath-breakers as wicked as himself to use his private billiard-table; but what his audacity dare not venture upon is to wear any head-covering whatsoever, in town or country, upon that sacred day, except that hideous, tall, round, brow-cutting thing, useless against wind and sun, and ruined by rain, which we call a hat. "Mad as a hatter," says the proverb; but surely madder are the people who demand such a commodity as this, and stare with wonder upon all (except the Blue-coat Boys) who are wise enough to reject it. Thus they stared at our new acquaintance, as he took his way westward, and so soon as he had passed through Leicester Square, for *there* nobody wonders at any peculiarity of costume, not that good-manners particularly prevail in that locality, but because foreigners, and very funny ones, do. Our friend in the strange headgear does not much mind being stared at, and stares about him a good deal in his turn, like a new-comer in a foreign land. The quiet of the unpopulous streets surprises him, and the closed shutters of the shops. Can this be roaring London, of which he has heard so much far across the seas, and the tumult of which beat upon his ear last night, even in his secluded lodging, like the thunders of "the league-long roller on the reef," in the clime from which he had arrived but a few days ago? He had never before seen London in

its Puritan garb; and its Sabbath dulness and sombrely attired inhabitants contrasted sharply with the towns and people to which he was accustomed. There were no idle soldiers in slip-shod uniforms; no priests; no beady-eyed negresses, carrying red water-jars upon their woolly heads; no sad-looking Indian mothers, with their slender babes astride upon their hips; no half-caste, half-dressed beauties with armlets and necklaces of gold. How different were those solid blocks of houses, each built after the pattern of the other, from the familiar one-storied, irregular dwellings, mean and fragile, and set in fenceless gardens, ravaged by hog and goat, but where, on the other hand, the luxuriance of nature clothed the most commonplace object with beauty, and instead of naked lamp-posts and stumpy pillar letter-boxes, the massive crowns of the mangoes and the feathery honors of the palms towered above orange and lemon blossoms, and the glorious banana cast its soft and varying green over every porch.

He strolled down to the river, and surveyed the teeming current, alive with tiny steamers, or bearing a thousand close-reefed vessels (and that by which he had crossed half the world among them,) emptied of their crews, and lazily swinging with the tide; and while he gazed, the scene dissolved before him, and in its place he beheld another river, sailless indeed, but compared with which the Thames is as a rivulet a child might leap, thousands of miles long, and deep almost as the sea itself, and broad, so that the two banks cannot be seen at once even from its centre; or where they *can* be seen, present two dense walls of infinitely various trees, rising cliff-like from the very waters; or if not so, where the stream is bordered only by long grasses, since the fury of its course has prostrated the mighty trunks on both sides, and whirled them down, not only to the coast, but scores and scores of miles into the Atlantic, before the terrible force of that great current succumbs to the all-surrounding sea, and leaves its prey. Men may travel and travel, and their minds, "like copper-wire, only grow the narrower by going further;" and indeed, I think this is generally the case. To send a dull fellow to behold the beauties of nature, is just as useless as to over-educate him at home—he only comes back to bore one with the information which persons of his class have already supplied in the geographies; but one who has a heart to appreciate as well as a brain to understand, is benefitted by having seen the rolling prairie, the giant river, the primeval forest, beyond all practical measure. He may not be benefitted by them practically at all, nor, in truth, is he likely to have been; but he has laid up for himself a store of mental food for life, no matter in what common-place circumstances he may be afterwards placed: the smaller inconveniences and anxieties of civilized existence are dwarfed for ever to the man who has camped for months in the stillness of the pathless woods, and carried his life in his hand.

So was it with our new acquaintance. He was glad to revisit his native land: there *was something dearer at home than anything which he had left in that far-away clime*, and the thought of it had comforted him there throughout his stay, and had brought him back at last. But he had rendered himself almost wholly independent of the narrow influences which affected nineteen-twentieths of those whom he met and passed in London streets that April Sunday; while his sympathy with them, from his long estrangement, perhaps, from all that called itself English, was, on the contrary, keen and strong.

Leaving the bridge, then, on which he had stood so long, with a sigh that spoke more of recollection of the past than of regret for it, he was once more strolling westward with steps aimless as ever, but very different from the dawdling tread of the street-lounger, when his ear was suddenly pierced by a cry of pain: it was a shrill and feeble sound, but expressed intense and sudden physical agony; and the effect upon him who heard it was as though he had himself received some violent and painful blow. His swarthy face in an instant grew black as a storm-cloud, his large eyes lost all their softness, and absolutely blazed with wrath, as, uttering some hasty words in Spanish, he bounded rather than ran to the place from which the cry had proceeded. This was a public arcade, used as a thoroughfare on week-days, but guarded from intrusion upon the Sabbath by a gate at one end, and at the other by a solitary beadle of imposing stature and severe aspect. A poor little beggar-girl, who had either managed to remain secreted there all night, or had slipped into it for shelter out of the wind, which had become keen and easterly within the last hour or so, was cringing in a corner of this place, and holding up her thin and naked arm to ward off a second blow from the beadle's walking-stick. The first had already left its mark upon the delicate flesh in a thick blue wheal.

"Get out, you young vagabones; I'll teach you to trespass here," growled the still angry functionary. "You may squall and squall, but you won't find nobody to mind you.—No, your arm ain't broken neither, you little liar; and I'm a-going to give you another cut."

"Son of the devil!" cried our bearded acquaintance, rushing unhesitatingly into this sacred arcade, with its shuttered shops, "if you touch that child again, I will send you to your father in——"

The precise locality was not, however, destined to be mentioned: the beadle's arm, whether wilfully or involuntarily, descended even while he was speaking, and a cry more piteous and terrible than before burst from the little victim's lips. The next instant the beadle received a 'facer' that knocked him backwards upon the flagstones, where he lay with only just so much instinct left in him as to cause him to spit a couple of teeth out which had stuck in his throat, and would have also gone nigh to choke him.

"Are you hurt much, my dear?" inquired his assailant of the trembling girl in tones of the utmost tenderness. "Has that brute really broken your arm?"

"No, sir; I don't think it's broke," sobbed the poor child—"though it hurts me very, very much. Don't ye, don't ye bide here, sir, another moment, or the pleesesman 'll come and take us both off to prison."

"Very sensible and good advice, that," said a strange voice close beside them: "a burned child dreads the fire; and this young person has, I daresay, been in custody already. Yes, I thought so. You are quite right to get away, little one, without renewing an acquaintance which (whatever his number) has never, I am sure, been A1 to you."

Gathering her rags together with her uninjured arm, and casting one glance of gratitude at her rescuer, the poor little creature fled from the dragon-guarded bower ere these warning words were finished, with a look like that of a hunted hare.

"A wise child," continued the stranger; "and if you will permit me to say so, sir, with more sagacity than her knight-errant. You are not an Englishman, I presume?"

"Yes, sir, I am English," returned the other quietly. "Five minutes ago, I was proud of the title. But if children may be beaten with impunity in London streets by every hulking scoundrel with a parish commission, such as this fellow, I shall begin to wish myself of any other nation."

"And this is your idea of impunity, is it, my friend?" said the stranger comically, pointing to the still prostrate guardian of the law. "His nose is bleeding, his jaw is smashed, the back of his skull—if a beadle's skull *can* be broken—is certainly stove in. You may call it poetical justice, a righteous retribution, or any name that suits your chivalric fancy; but I know what a prosaic coroner's jury will call it, if they're asked to give *their* opinion of this transaction; and again I say take example by your little confederate, and look it while you can. The expenses of a witness in criminal cases are not defrayed upon a very gorgeous scale, and therefore I am off for one."

"Is the man seriously hurt, think you?" observed the other, stooping down over the six-feet-two of parochial authority with some solicitude. "His cocked-hat—"

"Yes, yes," cried the stranger vehemently. "Come along, man, if you don't want to occupy a police-cell until to-morrow morning;" and with that he dragged rather than led his still hesitating companion out of the arcade, into which no inquisitive face had fortunately yet been thrust, and hurrying down the unfrequented streets at its mouth, plunged with him across a thoroughfare teeming with people just emerged from church, like a strong swimmer who has seized a drowning man, and is striking out for shore.

"There!" cried the stranger, when they were safe on the other side; "with that stream of good folks between us and pursuit, let us hope that we have baffled the blood-hounds of the law. And yet, my dear sir, if I was a policeman, and any little mischance in the way of manslaughter had happened within a quarter of a mile or so of this, I should pick you out as the man who did it, without a moment's hesitation. Don't you *see* how different you look from everybody about you? "Oh, why, oh, why don't you wear a hat?"

"Really, my good friend," returned the other laughing, "I did not know that my poor headgear, which has done such honest service both in heat and cold, and more than once has served me for a pillow in the roofless woods, *was an object of such suspicion, although I grant it is far from smart.*"

The speaker doffed the article in question, and regarded it with an expression of mingled ruefulness and amusement, very comical to see.

"Don't *do that*," exclaimed his Mentor earnestly. "If you hold a thing like that at arm's-length, you will be taken up for begging.—Forgive me, sir; I mean no offence; but I know my fellow-countrymen so well. I have not the slightest sympathy with their foolish prejudices myself: I don't look as if I had, I hope, sir, do I?"

The speaker certainly did not. There was scarce a greater difference between him and the respectable church-going throng, in whose midst they were now slowly moving, than between the same folks and the young fellow with the beard. His age could not have been under fifty-three, but he carried his years as jauntily as the hat, stuck sideways over his bald pate, or as the short stick, which he deftly twirled between his fingers, to the obvious alarm of his shrinking neighbors. He was stout even for his time of life, but there was a lively roll in his gait, which only his perfect naturalness and self-possession prevented from being a swagger; his moustache was gray rather than tawny, but he coaxed it with his white though gloveless hand as tenderly as any coquet of eighteen, while his bright brown eyes flashed hither and thither, and particularly beneath the bonnets of the female passers-by, as though everything was new to them under the sun.

The man with the beard thus adjured by his new friend's, "Do I?" took a long and steady look at him, longer and steadier than so lightly made a request seemed to demand, and then replied, with something of gravity in his tone: "No, sir; you certainly are not like these good folks; but like or not, I owe you a debt of gratitude for your prudent advice, and should be obliged if you would favor me with your name."

"My name is Claude Murphy—a poor painter, sir, but much at your service: you will find my address upon that card."

"You are very kind," returned the bearded man thoughtfully—"very kind to a total stranger in this ceremonious city."

"Not at all, not at all, my good sir; and the fact is, the more I look at you, the more convinced I feel of our not being altogether strangers. I never forget a face—for it is my trade to watch them—and I am almost sure that I have seen your face before. It is one which, without compliment, I may say I ought to be able to associate with its possessor at once, but I cannot call to mind your name."

"My name is Valentine Blake, sir; just returned from Buenos Ayres, where I have lived these twenty years; and my lodging for the present—a very humble one, but where I shall be pleased to see you—is No. 42 Perdu Square."

"Blake, Blake," returned the other, plunged so deep in reflection that he took no notice of his new friend's courteous invitation. "I know plenty of Blakes, as every Irishman does; but I don't remember a Valentine." (TO BE CONTINUED.)

☞ Among the candidates for degrees at a literary examination in China, not long since, was an old man aged 103 years, accompanied by his son, aged 80, his grandson of 50, and the great grandson of 20 years.

CHRISTMAS WOOING.

BY MORTIMER COLLINS.

I.

Down through the wintry woodlands
As to the mere we go,
Red berries we see of the holly-tree,
And pearls of the mistletoe;
And the ice is smooth for the skaters,
For the winds have swept the snow;
And a maiden divine o'er the hyaline
Flies fast, with cheeks aglow—
Like a marvellous bird, whose plumage gay
glitters in Eastern skies:
O, to follow her swift upon keel of steel, and
woo her as she flies!

II.

Bright hair and gay apparel
Stream back, as she meets the breeze;
And away she has shot, like a fairy yacht
On the blue soft Solent seas:
For the keen North wind's her wooer;
But she, with dainty ease,
From his rough grasp slips ere her waist he clips
With an arm that to bind must freeze.
There's a laugh on the daring darling's lip,
and joy in her bright brown eyes;
O, to follow her swift upon keel of steel, and
woo her as she flies!

ZOE FANE.

A Love Story in Four Chapters.

CHAPTER I.

AT NORHAM STATION.

It was growing dusk on a January afternoon as the train I was in puffed into a station on the Great Northern line, midway between London and York. I was bound to the latter place on some law business, and as I had only a very short time at my disposal, and wished, if possible, to return to London by the mail train that same night, I did not feel over well-pleased when the porter banged open the door of my carriage, announcing—

"Get out here if you please, sir. There's been an accident a bit farther down the line, and this train 'll not go on for an hour and a half."

But it was no use anthematising either the train or the porter, who went on banging other carriage doors open in sublime indifference to my vexation; and after gathering together my rug and papers, I made the best of a bad job, and sat down to wait patiently in the gentlemen's waiting-room till the hour and a half should be expired. I had been there for about half an hour, and was beginning to feel very impatient, when the slow train, which had started from King's Cross some time before the express, and had enlivened the journey by stopping at every little station on its way down, arrived; and, like its predecessor, began to empty itself of its occupants. By way of amusement, I rose and strolled on to the platform, thinking to console myself by hearing other unfortunates lament their evil fate. As I passed a first-class carriage half-way down the train, I noticed two ladies emerging from it; and a sentence or two I heard one of them utter in an agitated voice immediately arrested my attention and curiosity.

"Oh, Willis!" she said, as she descended from the carriage, "it seems as if fate were against me. They will miss us and catch me now, just as I thought I was safe."

"Nay, don't fret so, Miss Zoe," said the other woman, who I saw now was evidently an attendant: "there no other train from Birley till ten o'clock to-night."

"But you forget the telegraph, that dreadful telegraph," returned the girl. "I know we shall be stopped,—oh, Willis!"

The exclamation was uttered in a tone of the greatest terror, and involuntarily I looked round to see what had caused it. At the same moment a tall, aristocratic-looking man who had entered my carriage in a great hurry at one of the few places at which the train had stopped, came up to the two and laid his hand on the young lady's arm.

"Well, Zoe," he said, in a quiet tone, in which, however, I detected a good deal of concentrated emotion of some sort, "I am glad to have found you with so little trouble."

The girl said nothing, but as I strolled slowly past—feeling, it must be confessed, a little curious—I saw that she was trembling violently, so violently that she was obliged to cling to her attendant for support, who passed her arm round the slight figure with a tender, caressing movement, and seemed to be trying to soothe her as one would soothe a frightened child.

"Thank you, Willis," I heard the gentleman say, quietly; "but, after this, I shall dispense with your services. Come into the waiting-room, and I will pay you your wages. Now, Zoe," he added, sternly, "no more of this nonsense. Come immediately."

I heard a quick, low cry, and caught a few expostulating, entreating words from the elder woman, and then the whole party vanished into the waiting-room, and I heard no more.

I felt considerably puzzled, and instead of returning to my seat, walked up and down the platform, hoping to see or hear more. It was no business of mine, but somehow the intense terror in the girl's voice had interested me, and I felt a little curiosity to see her face which had been closely veiled. I can generally picture a woman's face to myself from hearing her voice, and this one, even in its fright, was especially low and musical; I argued, therefore, that its owner must be very pretty. I have sometimes found myself mistaken in this theory, and once a voice belonging to a lovely face I saw in a London ball-room startled me from its very harshness; but in this one I thought I could not be mistaken. I glanced undecidedly towards the ladies' waiting-room, which by this time was brilliantly lighted, and then making up my mind I walked boldly to the door. Surely, if that gentleman had a right to be in there against the rules, so had I.

When I reached the door, however, I paused, for there before me, plainly visible through the panes of glass which formed the upper portion of it, was the face I had come to see. The girl was standing by the table with her veil thrown back, and the full glare of the gas-lamp shining on her face.

And what a lovely, innocent, childlike face it was! In spite of the terror, and almost despair, depicted upon it—in spite of the tears, which were streaming from the large blue eyes, I thought it then, as I think it now, the loveliest face I have ever seen.

The other woman was weeping also, whilst the gentleman, with unmistakeable anger in his face and with a haughty contemptuous movement, was throwing down sovereigns on the table before her. The woman did not heed him though, and I gazed on at the strange scene half fascinated, till the gentleman turned round, and seizing the girl's hand, utterly regardless of her imploring face, dragged rather than led her to the door. Then I moved away, and began to saunter up and down as before; but when the two—the lady and gentleman, whose relation to each other I now began to wonder about—went through the booking-office towards the entrance, I followed too, and heard the direction given in a hasty tone to the cabman—

"To the best hotel in this cursed place, and be quick."

Then the door was shut and the cab drove off, leaving me interested and curious; and determined somehow or other to know more of its occupants.

Full of this determination, I returned to the waiting-room; where, as I expected, the other woman was still seated in an agony of grief; and making up my mind what to do, accosted her—after the manner of benevolent individuals one reads of in good books—with—

"You seem in great distress, my good woman. Can I do anything for you?"

For a long time my efforts to make anything out of her incoherent sentences were in vain; but presently, when she became a little more composed, I gathered a small degree of information respecting the scene I had witnessed. The gentleman, she told me was Mr. Fane of Charlton Abbey, in Hertfordshire; "not that it belongs to him," she added, suddenly raising her head quickly, "it's all Miss Zoe's, every stick and stone upon the property, more's the pity; but old Mr. Charlton settled all his money on Miss Zoe when he died, which was only a year after her poor mother, his daughter, and there's been no peace for the child ever since."

The woman was speaking in an excited indignant tone, and when she had finished she swept the money off the table into her lap, muttering audibly as she did so, "Not that I would touch a farthing of it, if it were his—but it ain't, it's Miss Zoe's."

"And who's Miss Zoe?" I inquired.

"Why, Miss Fane, his own daughter, to be sure, as he's gone and taken off in that way, with nobody to see to her; and she can't dress or undress herself no more than a child. Oh, my poor lamb! my precious darling!" and here the woman subsided into a fit of weeping again.

At this moment, much to my relief—for I am not over partial to weeping, elderly females—the porter put his head into the room inquiring, "Any one for York by this train? it's going on now. It's against the rules for you to be here, sir; have you any luggage?"

I sent him off in search of my portmanteau, and then set myself to persuade the woman, whose name was Willis, to travel to York in my carriage, and tell me something more about Miss Zoe; and as she seemed quite alive to the pleasure of having an interested listener to her tale, she assented very readily. The little excitement of starting composed her, and when we were fairly off, and she recommenced the story of her wrongs, I was able to understand and sympathise with her more coherent narrative.

Old Mr. Charlton, of Charlton Abbey, whose only daughter Mr. Fane had married, died in 1854, a year after his daughter, leaving his granddaughter, Zoe, Mr. Fane's only child, sole heiress to his immense wealth. He had only two other relations living, distant cousins, of the name of John and Eliza Hollice, the latter of whom had been Zoe's governess ever since she was old enough to require one. This Miss Hollice Mr. Fane had married a fortnight after old Mr. Charlton's death. Miss Fane was to be under her father's guardianship until she attained the age of twenty-one or married; in case of her death, the property was to be divided equally between the present Mrs. Fane and her brother, Mr. Hollice, unless Miss Fane had married, and left children, when it was to descend to them.

This information, I only gained through skillful questions; for all Willis's ideas and affections were centred on her young mistress, and she was apt to diverge from the path of strict narrative in order to enlarge upon the unkind usage which, she asserted, Miss Fane received at home.

"They want her to marry Mr. Hollice, sir," answered Willis, to my inquiry as to the reason of the ill-usage," "and Miss Zoe can't bear him. Mr. Fane does just as his wife bids him, and she hates Miss Zoe for her beauty, and for having all the money, and wants to get it for her own children. Why, lor' bless you, sir!" continued Willis, in a tone of profound pity for my ignorance; "Mr. Fane ain't got a farthing of his own, except what's allowed him for Miss Zoe; and if he were to die, Mrs. Fane and her children might go to the workhouse any day; and I should like to see them there."

"But why do they want Miss Zoe to marry Mr. Hollice?" I inquired; "she looks such a child."

"She is eighteen, sir, and they are afraid of her marrying any one else, for lots have been after her. But Mr. Hollice is desperately fond of her, and they say he has promised Mrs. Fane half the money if he marries her."

I pondered over the woman's tale as we were whirled to York, wondering if the account of the unkind usage were really true; and then, as I recollected the scene at the station, I inquired—

"But what has been the cause of your dismissal? Had you and Miss Zoe run away?"

I daresay I spoke gravely, for the idea of an elopement from her father's house caused me to think gravely for a few minutes of the beautiful young heiress, and the woman flared up immediately.

"Because it was more than flesh and blood could stand, to see Miss Zoe teased and lectured at every turn as if she were a dog; and that by Mrs. Fane, who is not fit to hold a candle to her. I won't say that Mr. Fane's so bad when he's let alone, but Mrs. Fane can turn him round her little finger, and she hates Miss Zoe."

"And what is Mr. Hollice like?" I asked. "Is he a gentleman?"

"He's one if fine clothes will make him one," returned Willis, scornfully; "but he's not one for bothering Miss Zoe. However, she hates him, and she's spirit enough in her to stand 'em all out yet, I do believe, and there are only three more years, and then she can do as she likes."

"And where were you going to-day?" I asked.

"To York. I've a sister as lives there, and Miss Zoe wanted to hide away until she was twenty-one. I got my brother, who is a clerk in London, to tell me all about the will, sir, and that's how we came to know. She don't mind her papa scolding her, and she's as good as possible with him; but when Mrs. Fane begins, she answers her back directly, and speaks her mind a bit—and then she's sent to her own room and kept locked up there for days. She had been there for a week till this morning, when I let her out and we came away."

Somehow, though I could not think the woman right in what she had done, yet the truthfulness of her tale made a strong impression upon me; and when I parted with her I gave her my address, and asked her to let me know if she heard more of her young mistress; promising in my turn to report to her if—as I thought was most unlikely—I should ever see or hear anything of Miss Fane again.

And then I went off to my dry business, and when I returned to London the next day, tried to put the young ill-used heiress out of my thoughts. But the lovely grief-stricken face would not altogether vanish, and many a time in the course of the next two years, I troubled my brain a good deal about her, though for the whole of that time I never heard or saw anything of her.

CHAPTER II.

THE NORHAM BALL.

There was to be a grand ball in aid of the dispensary at one of the midland county towns, and my sister, the wife of a baronet in the neighborhood, was to be the lady patroness of it.

What use she thought I, Edmund Darent, barrister-at-law, could be to her in this arduous duty, I don't know; but she sent me such an entreating letter of invitation for it, that I could not find it in my heart to refuse. It so happened, though I did not remember it till I got to the platform, that the station at which I left the train was the very one where, two years before, I had encountered Zoe Fane; and perhaps the familiar scene recalled to my mind all the details that Willis had told me of her history, and made the sweet young face picture itself, as vividly as when I had seen it in the flesh, to my imagination.

Certain it was that, during my solitary drive to Sir John Norham's, I thought a good deal of her, and wondered, a little sadly, if the bright young spirit were yet broken, and if, under persecution, she had consented to marry the man she hated.

There was a large party assembled at my sister's dinner-table that night, and I could not help groaning a little in spirit when she whispered to me maliciously that it would be expected of me to dance with them all.

"All the ladies, that is to say, you know, Edmund; and they were so curious to know if you could dance, when I told them you were coming. Since you won that famous case, it is wonderful what reflected glory I have been enjoying."

I answered her at random, for I had caught a name at the other end of the table, and I was curious to hear more. Presently a guest addressed my sister.

"Where did you say the Fanes came from, Lady Norham? Was it Hertfordshire?"

"Yes. By-the-bye, Edmund, we have got some new neighbors since you were here. Did you know that the Markhams had let the Priory, and gone abroad?"

"No. When did that happen?"

"About a year ago; and a Mr. Fane, from Charlton Abbey, in Hertfordshire, lives there now. He is a rich man, and lives in a great deal of style. They have a ball next week, which you must stay for, and they dine here to-morrow. I think you will like them."

Lady Norham was accustomed to drawing quick conclusions. In this case she happened to be mistaken.

"Will they be at that place you are going to to-night?" I asked.

"Yes, I should think so. At least, of course they will; but I wish you wouldn't call it a place so disrespectfully, Edmund, as if it hadn't a name."

I remedied my mistake, and then asked, carelessly, "Is Mr. Fane married?"

"Oh, yes; he has been married twice. This is his second wife, and, *entre nous*, I am not very much in love with her. But his daughter makes up for all deficiencies, as she is perfectly enchanting; though I can't help thinking there's a little mystery about her."

"What sort of a mystery?"

"I can scarcely tell. One thing, Mr. Fane never lets her go out alone—I mean from home. I took a great fancy to her, and have asked her to stay here once or twice, but I can't get her; and, then, I don't think she is happy. However, she is going to be married soon, now; so perhaps she does not like the thought of leaving home."

She was not married then yet, I thought; and unconsciously I felt glad.

"Who is she going to marry, Emmy?" I asked.

"A Mr. Hollice. He is her step-mother's brother, and a very gentlemanly looking man. He appears devoted to her, but I can't say I think she cares much for him. However, you will see and judge for yourself about them to-night, Edmund. I think even you—woman-hater though you profess yourself—will be enchanted with Zoe. Isn't it a funny name?"

Three hours later I was in the Norham ball-room, undergoing the misery of a quadrille on a floor like ice, with one of my sister's pretty guests for a partner. I did

my best, and tried to make myself as agreeable as was in my power, with all the surplus energies that were not occupied in keeping my feet from slipping away from my body; but my partner was young and country-bred, and thought a great deal more of the pretty dresses round her, and of her own skirts—which she appeared to be afraid of tearing—than of my conversation. So after the first figure I held my tongue, and allowed her to pursue her own innocent reflections unmolested; occupying myself by vain attempts to see over the heads of my neighbors whether the party I was looking for had yet entered the room. Suddenly a name behind me arrested my attention, and on turning round presently, I saw that four people, two ladies and two gentlemen, were standing behind me on the square of carpet reserved at one end of the room, for the *elite* and aristocracy of the neighborhood.

There was no mistaking Mr. Fane's tall, haughty figure, though I had only seen him once, and the lady on his arm would of course be his wife. Even in my first quick glance I took a dislike to the swarthy face and dark flashing eyes, and the gentleman who stood next her—evidently her brother, from the likeness between them, though he looked younger, as well as more refined—came in for a share of this feeling.

But was that girl whose hand rested on the gentleman's arm, the Zoe Fane of my recollection?

I gazed incredulously into the lovely eyes which I had last seen streaming with tears. There were no tears there now, but a world of trouble seemed to lie in their blue depths under the weary-looking lids, and the face which might have been cut out of marble, it was so immobile and still, was the saddest I have ever seen. There was no girlish spirit in it now, no childlike grief or terror such as I had before witnessed; it was as perfectly calm in its mournfulness as the face of a statue, but there was that in its expression which revealed to me a history of suffering and wrong; and when I looked at the dark, swarthy, triumphant woman again, I hated her!

"I will defeat you yet," I inwardly vowed, as I turned away; "and I will never rest till that girl's face looks happier."

It was a resolution worthy of twenty-five rather than of thirty-five; but I made it in the full determination of acting upon it; and after that first dance was over, I went to my sister and made her introduce me to Mr. Fane. I had soon requested the favor of Miss Fane's hand for the next dance; and when I had obtained it, I exerted myself as I had never exerted myself in my life before, to make myself agreeable, and, if possible, win her confidence. She was easy to get on with after I had once broken the crust of reserve with which I could see she was accustomed to treat all her acquaintances; but I had determined to be more than a mere acquaintance to her; and when the dance was over, I gained her promise of another later in the evening, telling her that I had a piece of information to give her, which I thought and hoped might interest her. We were walking up the room towards her step-mother when I said this; and the quick, eager glance with which she looked up in my face as I uttered the words, was instantly checked when she came under the influence of Mrs. Fane's dark, suspicious eyes; and when I left her she gave me the quietest, coldest bow imaginable, and then I saw her standing, quiet and unmoved, by her step-mother's side, until her betrothed husband led her away to dance again. I rather wondered how she would receive the communication I intended making. I thought it would not be pleasant to receive a scornful or angry glance from those lovely eyes, in return for what she might, perhaps, consider an unpardonable impertinence. But then she looked so sad and unhappy. Surely almost any means were justifiable to let her know she had a friend whom she might trust; and, at anyrate, I was determined to try the experiment.

Accordingly, when the dance she had promised me arrived, I took her as far as possible from her step-mother's seat, and then, during a pause to rest, I turned her so that her father—who, I had been conscious, was watching us narrowly during both dances—could not see her face, and said, as quietly and gently as possible—

"I dare say you will not remember me, Miss Fane, but this is not the first time I have seen you, and I recollected you the moment I saw you."

She looked a little startled I thought, and paused to consider a moment before she answered—

"No, I don't remember ever seeing you before; when was it?"

I hesitated a moment, and then said, hurriedly, without looking in her face—

"It was the afternoon of the 8th of January, 1863, on the platform of the Norham station. Excuse me, I thought you wanted a friend then, but was powerless to interfere, and I think you want one still. I will do for you whatever lies in my power, if you will only trust me. Now shall we go on?"

I bent over her as I spoke, and after one glance into her eyes—those lovely, startled eyes, which had an expression in them like that in the eyes of a frightened deer—I put my arm round her waist and whirled her off just as Mr. Hollice sauntered down the room towards us; and I hoped he did not see the crimson checks which I tried in that way to hide. Presently I spoke again, whirling her rapidly round all the time—

"Your maid Willis is my mother's housekeeper now, in Yorkshire. I shall be going there next week, and she will be nearly out of her mind when I tell her I have seen you—her 'precious lamb' she calls you. What may I tell her about you?"

"Nothing," she said, and I felt her a dead weight on my arm. I was carrying her round the room now, but I was well content that it should be so—I felt strong enough to carry her anywhere, so that it might be away from what was troubling her. After a moment she continued, half-despairingly, "She had better forget me."

"I think people who have once known you cannot easily do that," I answered; "although I did not know you, what I saw on that afternoon made me ask Willis for your history; and now I do know you, I should like to prove myself a friend. Will you trust me?"

"It will be no use—nobody can do anything for me now. I have given my word, and I cannot recall it."

"Excuse me, but an extorted promise goes for nothing," I answered. "I hear you are to marry Mr. Hollice, but I cannot believe that you will consent to act such a lie."

I was astonished at my own boldness. Here was I speaking to a girl I had only known half an hour, as if I were her oldest guardian and mentor. But she did not appear to think anything I said strange. Poor child! I think she hoped I could save her, after the first sentence of our conversation.

"What am I to do?" she asked. "You would not have me disobey my father, and I am weary of struggling, and don't seem to care what happens to me now."

"But you must care," I said, gravely and earnestly. "Promise me to care henceforth, and I will promise that you shall not be made to marry Mr. Hollice."

"Will you?" she said, eagerly, and then she added, despairingly, "But my father, he will almost kill me. Nobody can help me now."

"But, I assure you, I will help you. When shall you be twenty-one?"

"On the 20th of next May; but I am to be married before then."

"Yes, I suppose so. But the dance is over, and I do not think it will be wise to ask you for another to-night;" then, as I saw with a sensation of gladness her eyes droop, and her face cloud again, I went on, "but you will be dining at my sister's to-morrow, and I will talk to you again then. Meanwhile, I promise to do all in my power to help you if you will only trust me unreservedly. Do you promise?"

"Yes," she said, hesitatingly; and then she looked up yearningly, "but what must you think of me? I assure you it is not my father's fault."

"I know," I answered, "and I don't think it is. But don't distress yourself about what any one thinks of you; be assured that it is nothing evil."

And then I surrendered her to Mr. Hollice, watching angrily the airs of tenderness and devotion he displayed to her, and inwardly vowing again that I would not rest until I had made her love me, and had won her for my own.

During the fortnight that followed, on some pretext or another, I saw Zoe Fane every day; and I managed the meetings so cleverly, that I don't believe Mrs. Fane—who seemed to be Argus-eyed in anything relating to her step-daughter—had the slightest suspicion that I loved her. But Zoe knew it; and, when I went into Yorkshire, I had gained her promise to become my wife.

Poor child! How she clung to me that last night—when, for the furtherance of my plans, I had persuaded my sister into some private theatricals, with a ball to follow. I was afraid her agitation would betray us, but she had learnt to control herself during the last two sad years; and I soon saw, when we returned to the ball-room after that stolen leave-taking, that I need not fear for her.

I went into Yorkshire and gained my mother's promise of hearty co-operation in my plans, whatever they might be, and then I returned to London and had a long interview with the trustees of old Mr. Charlton's property; both of whom I had previously known a little. The result of this interview was that one of them went down to Norham Priory unannounced, on pretence of business connected with the property, but, in reality, that he might judge for himself if the tale I told him were true. They were wise men, those two trustees, and thought, perhaps, in spite of their previous knowledge of me, that I had an eye to old Mr. Charlton's broad acres; and my only fear now was, lest Mr. Fane should be able to deceive them, and that Zoe might be coerced into hiding the truth. However, two days afterwards, I received a letter from Mr. Mortimer, in which he told me that he was satisfied in his own mind that Miss Fane was averse to the marriage, which was now being speedily pressed forward; that, however, she appeared too frightened whilst under her father's eye to express her dislike to it, and that that being the case, he was powerless to interfere. Thereupon, I wrote an imploring note to Zoe, which I enclosed in one to Mr. Mortimer, begging her to keep firm to her resolution, and to speak boldly out to her father, before Mr. Mortimer, her unwillingness to marry Mr. Hollice; and I wrote by the same post to Mr. Fane, making proposal for his daughter's hand. I should have done this before, only that I feared making the announcement until Zoe had a friend to stand by her; and I heard afterwards that Mr. Fane had flown into a terrible passion with her, and had used language concerning me which was anything but complimentary. Then Mr. Mortimer returned to town and told me he could do nothing to prevent the marriage unless Zoe expressly declared her unwillingness to it, which he feared she would not do if she were left much longer at her father's, or rather step-mother's mercy.

"Then what is to be done?" I inquired. "I don't suppose I shall ever be allowed to see her, and, of course, all my letters will be intercepted. Can't you do anything?"

"Not unless Miss Fane herself wishes me to interfere," Mr. Mortimer answered; "but how am I to know she doesn't want to marry the man, when she only sits and trembles, and won't open her mouth?"

"My poor Zoe!" I cried out; then, as a sudden inspiration seized me, "but couldn't you get her to sign something to the effect that she doesn't want to marry him?"

"If I couldn't get her to speak," said Mr. Mortimer, reflectively, "I don't suppose I could get her to write. I tried hard, and was up to all sorts of tricks to see her alone, but that woman was one too many for me; and how could I tell Mr. Fane that he was using coercion to the girl, when his look would have made her contradict me? It's no use, I tell you, unless you can get her away."

"But I don't believe she would ever consent to running away with me," I replied. "Besides, it is such a horrid way of getting out of the mess."

"I don't see any other, because, as I tell you, I saw enough to feel certain the girl won't speak. She loves her father, and I believe he loves her, in a way; but that brute of a wife has entire influence over him, and it's evident enough to me that she hates the girl, besides wishing for her money. I think it's lucky it's nothing worse than a wedding they are compassing."

"But I don't see how it will benefit Mrs. Fane for Zoe to marry Mr. Hollice," I said.

"Of course not openly," he replied; "but doubtless the brother, to whom I give the credit of really loving Zoe, has bribed her with promises of something when he has married. And probably a good slice of the property would be made over to her; for once married, I suppose she would not much care what became of her money, and she has absolute power over every farthing after the twentieth of May."

"Then what must I do?" I inquired; "for I swear she shall not marry that man, if I have to cut his throat to prevent it."

Mr. Mortimer laughed. He did not love Zoe as I did; he had not heard her imploring petitions to be saved from Mr. Hollice, and he had not felt the tightening clasp of those clinging arms round his neck, nor the warm passionate kisses on his lips, as I had. I felt nearly mad when I thought of it all, and remembered my own powerlessness; for somehow the running-away scheme was very distasteful to me, and there was such a thing as being overtaken and being carried back in disgrace. I racked my brains in vain for a scheme that would answer better, and whilst I was considering, Mr. Mortimer spoke again.

"Get your mother or Lady Norham to run away with her as you went, and let them bring her to my house. She will be safe enough there with my wife, and if need be I will forcibly detain her. Very likely, though, they won't discover her till after you are married. Will that suit you?"

Yes, the more I thought over this plan the more I thought it likely to answer, provided only I could get Zoe's consent to it. But how I was to obtain that I couldn't think. My powers of invention seemed utterly at fault, now that they were wanted in my own behalf, though they had served me a good turn many a time when required for somebody else's benefit. It was clear, however, that I could do nothing in London; so after promising to telegraph if anything occurred, and if I were able to get Zoe away, I set off for Norham, rather astonishing my sister by my unexpected reappearance.

She was still more astonished when, under the seal of secrecy—for I rather dreaded my brother-in-law's blunt good nature—I told her what I had come for; and it took some little time and an extraordinary quantity of entreaties, threats of suicide, and appeals to her good nature, before I could gain her consent to do what I wanted of her. However, she consented at last reluctantly enough, and the moment she had done so, woman-like, turned round and reproached me bitterly for what I hadn't done to save Zoe. Then she began to arrange the most likely schemes which occurred to her, to be put in practice if a personal interview which I was to demand of Mr. Fane the next day should prove unsuccessful. And I felt certain somehow that it would prove fruitless, although I was determined to try it before having recourse to anything *so romantic as an elopement.*

(CONCLUDED NEXT WEEK.)

THE DRIFTING BOAT.

It had floated away from the beach and bay,
Out of sight of tower and town,
An empty and a battered boat;
But that boat would not go down.
The morning rose on the waters wide,
And the night fell cold and dark,
Yet ever on with the wind and tide
Drifted that battered bark.

The sail had passed from its broken mast,
And its painted pride was dim;
The salt sea-weed clung round its bows,
Which had been so sharp and trim.
Where were the merry mates and free
Who had gone with it afloat
We never learned; but the world's wide sea
Hath lives like that drifting boat.

Lives that in early storms have lost
Anchor and sail and oar,
And never, except on Lethe's shore,
Can come to moorings more;
Out of whose loveless, trustless days
The hope and the heart have gone—
Good ships go down in the stormy seas,
But those empty boats drift on!

They had hearts to sail in the wind's eye once;
They had hands to reef and steer,
With a strength that would not stoop to chance,
And a faith that knew no fear;
But the years were long and the storms were strong,
And the rainbow-flag was furled,
And they that launched for the skies have grown
But the drift-wood of the world.

Ancient China.

A resurrection of some Oriental literature is very humiliating to our Western and nineteenth century pride, in showing how far the Chinese had gone in point of civilization when Europe was barbarian and America unknown. They were burning coal before the Christian era; they were printing A. D. 551, with black, and lithographing three centuries later. Yet another century, and they were using movable types of terra cotta, porcelain, water-tight compartments in ships, portraits for catching criminals—all these were known to them in those days. And it even appears that 919 years before Christ these Celestials used leather greenbacks. The Chinese had also the tradition of the Madonna and child. This symbol was the Tien-How, the Queen of Heaven, represented as nursing her infant son, who holds a lotus-bud in his hand, as a symbol of the new birth. There is a model of this group, in porcelain, in the Ethnological Museum of Copenhagen.—*The Optimist.*

☞ The Saturday Review tells a story of an English clergyman, who, misled by the prevalent printing of certain Scriptural words in italic, read in a sonorous voice, with undue emphasis—"And he spake to his sons, saying—'Saddle me an ass. And they saddled *him.*'"

☞ Horace Greeley states that since he commenced the New York Tribune, in 1841, there have been not less than two hundred new journals started in New York, and two only can be said to be alive to-day.

Lying.

BY REV. HENRY WARD BEECHER.

What is lying? What are lies? A lie is the intentional misleading of another in respect to the truth of things. It may be an action, or it may be a speech. And that which is its essential essence is, that it is an intentional misleading of another person in regard to the truth. It is instituting, in other words, false impressions in regard to facts or events upon other men's minds.

This differs from simple caution or reserve. A man may perceive that a neighbor has taken up a wrong impression, not because he by act or word intended that he should, but from some other cause, and he may think it prudent to keep silent. That certainly is not telling a lie. If a man thinks you are worth five hundred thousand dollars, and you know that you are worth but one hundred thousand, you are not bound to undeceive him. Silence is not falsehood. A man has a right to keep his own counsel. In other words, we are not obliged to tell all the truth always. Holding back what you know is not lying, necessarily; and often it is perfectly just to withhold it. But when a man does speak, he has no right to speak any thing but the truth. He is not obliged to speak always, he has a right to silence; but if he does break silence, I hold him amenable to the law of truth. In other words, he is obliged to produce upon the minds of men the exact facts of events. He is not to deceive.

Nor are we to confound lies with transient deceptions of art. Criminal lies and the deceptions of art are not alike, or in analogy. For neither the object nor the effect of what are called *art deceptions* is to produce a false impression. On the contrary, the very thing that is sought by the representations of art is to produce the effect of truth. When a portrait is painted and put where to the child it looks as if it was his father, it is not intended that to the child it shall look as if it was his father. But the artist would be pleased as if it should be so faithful as to suggest to the child his father. For a portrait is designed to be a suggestion, a souvenir, of a face that we want to recall. Art attempts to bring truth, by specious appearances, to bear more plainly upon the minds of men than it could be made to do in any other way. And the object is not by imitation to deceive and make things appear to be what they are not. The object of painting flowers and fruits is to bring the originals more vividly to the imagination and the senses of a man than they could be in any other way.

Neither are we to confound lies with dramatic representations, nor with any of the representations of literature. Fables are not lies. Allegories are not lies. Fairy stories, though there is not a word of truth in them, are not lies. It is not their aim or effect to leave upon the minds of those who read them an impression that is not true. On the contrary, *the end sought to be accomplished* by these unreal instruments, has been an end of absolute truth.

We are to understand that, setting aside these possible misconceptions that may be made, a lie is an attempt, deliberate and intentional, to leave upon the mind of another an impression in respect to facts or events which is not true.

Now, is it ever justifiable? You will all agree with me that lying in general is wrong; but are there exceptional cases? I do not ask whether there are exceptional cases in which, if a man does lie, people will judge him very leniently. Of that there is no doubt. I do not say but that, under certain circumstances, I should lie. What I have the strength to do, or the weakness not to do, does not determine moral principles. The producing false impressions in the mind of another—is it ever justifiable? I take the ground unhesitatingly and unqualifiedly that it is never justifiable, from any motive or for any purpose whatever. The guilt of an evil done is to be inferred both from the motive of the doer and the effect of the deed. The mischief which it actually causes will vary the guilt of a falsehood from slight blameworthiness to the severest grade of guilt; but though some are less guilty in telling falsehoods than others, yet none are innocent. Though some falsehoods may be palliated, none can be excused.

Lies may be divided, first, into lies of convenience and custom; second, into lies of caution and self-defence; and third, into lies of interest, in which we do ourselves, or are supposed to do ourselves some good, and others no harm; and fourth, lies of malice, told for the injury of others. In general, lies may be divided into two classes: first, lies told for the benefit of the teller, without injury to anybody else; and second, those told for the injury of others.

Now I may dismiss this last and worst class as condemned in the judgment of men. It is on every hand accounted wrong. We are in danger of erring only in regard to lies told for our convenience and benefit. The question occurs: "Is it wrong to tell falsehoods when they benefit the teller and other people; when they prevent evil; when they secure good; when they suppress intentions of malice? The lie that works for benefit—is it right to tell it? I unhesitatingly say: No, it is not; because no man can be certain that a falsehood will prevent evil or secure good. Experience shows that in perhaps a majority of cases the expectation of securing good by the telling of falsehoods is disappointed; and even if it does secure some immediate and transient good, I hold that it is always at the expense of mischiefs remotely incurred which more than overbalance all the benefit. Besides, a lie is a sin both against God and a man's own soul.

Let us consider a few instances.

It is sometimes said that we have a right to tell lies to the insane. My reply is, that you can not tell a lie to an insane person. Insanity is a condition in which the mind is incapable of receiving impressions of the truth. The very definition puts these persons out of the category; because in that diseased state in which they are not susceptible of receiving truth, a misrepresentation can not well be made to them. You can not deceive a person who has no reasoning powers. You can not tell a lie to a fly, because he can not accept it. You can not tell a tree a lie. You can not tell a lie to a stone. Suppose you say to a tree: "My dear fellow, you are forty years old," when it is only ten, you do not tell that tree a lie. You do not produce a false impression on its mind, though as to yourself it may be foolish or imprudent. Our moral duties imply that we deal with other intelligent moral agents; so that this allegation of the right to lie to an insane person is put aside.

The next strong point made is that we have a right to lie to our enemies in time of war. No, I think not. Suppose Gen. Sherman had said to Hood: "If you will abandon Atlanta, I will retreat to the North," and Hood had abandoned Atlanta, and Gen. Sherman had marched upon the city and taken it? Suppose Gen. Grant had said to Lee's army: "Lay down your arms and surrender, and you shall return to your homes—otherwise you shall suffer injury;" and suppose they had complied with these conditions; and suppose he had then broken his word? Many people seem to think that it is a foregone conclusion that you have a right to lie to an enemy; but I say that you have no such right. Some one asks: "Is it not right to deceive him?" You have no right to tell him a lie. But war is a game, not between men in society, but between societies and societies, in which it is the understanding on both sides that, so far as by manœuvres they can mislead each other, they may do it. It is a thing understood beforehand. Do I deceive you when I am playing chess with you, if I make as if I was bearing down on a man on one side, and then, when I have got you on the defensive, instantly change my tactics, and sweep down on a man on the other side? It is understood that I shall do such things if I can. Two camps lie over against each other. One of the armies means to retreat; but at night they build camp fires as if they did not. Is any body deceived? or, if the other army are deceived, is any body culpable for the deception? It is part and parcel of the science of war which both armies carry into the field, with the understanding that one or the other shall avail themselves of it if they have an opportunity. It is the legerdemain of war, and differs very widely from that deliberate deception which is often practiced in matters of social intercourse.

Closely allied to this is the case of robbers. Suppose you are overtaken in the woods by a robber, and by lying you can save your life and your money, have you a right to do it? I am not asking whether a man probably would or would not do it. I am not asking whether a man should be blamed vehemently if he did it. I am simply asking whether the ethical principle of truth requires of the ideal and real man that he should be truthful under all circumstances. I hold that a man has not a right to lie to a robber, even. If a robber breaks into your house at night, you have a right to fight and kill him if you can; but if he asks you a question which, if you answer truly, will lead to the slaying of your wife and children, you are not obliged to speak; but if you do speak, you are bound to speak the truth. You have a right to keep silence, but not to tell a lie.

There is a large class of deceptions which are plead and extenuated, such as telling lies to children, and telling lies to sick persons. I set my face against the whole of this miserable tribe of wickednesses. A lie told to a child is a monstrous thing. I abhor it. And yet lies are told to children as thick as cloves are stuck in hams when dressed for public occasions. Your child is sick, and you bring him a potion, and say: "It is good, my dear, it is good," when it is as bitter as gall. You are not only a liar, but a fool. The child learns after a little time, not only that the medicine is not good, but that the truth is not to be regarded. You not only give the child an odious dose of medicine, but you give him a more odious dose of morals. You inoculate him with a spirit of lying in the beginning. I think we cannot be too careful to speak the truth—and, above all, to children.

As to the sick, I do not believe it is necessary to tell them all the truth; but if you tell them anything, tell them the truth. A doctor is not justified in lying to his patient. It is easy for him to say to the person whose case he has undertaken: "You must have confidence in me;" but if he says anything, let him say the truth. It may excite the patient, or it may not; but if excitability is a reason for not telling the truth, then it is a reason for silence. It is not a reason for deception. I think that such persons are oftentimes injured by being deceived. I think there is a great deal of cruelty practiced toward sick people in this way. And I think it a shame to let sick persons go blindfolded down to death, and drop off without a single word, for fear that they will be injured if the truth is told them. I think if a person is going to die he has a right to know it. I do not, therefore, believe in telling lies to sick folks.

But there is a higher ground from which this subject should be argued. These are low grounds on which I have thus far based my argument. We are, first, to consider what is to be the effect of any course upon our own moral character; and second, we are to consider what is to be the effect of any course upon the society of which we are integral parts. If telling lies is right, it is right because it is harmless to us and to society. And whatever special pleas men may make in justification of telling falsehoods, if it can be shown that the habit acts back upon the whole moral constitution of the individual, or upon the moral condition of society, it cannot be justified on any ground whatever.—*Herald of Health.*

☞ Theodore, King of Abyssinia, says that he has made an agreement not to ascend to Heaven to fight with God, and God has agreed not to descend to earth to fight with him.

☞ A London Review says of the author of "Norwood," that a man may be a fluent preacher and brother of a clever woman, and yet break down when he attempts to write a novel.

☞ The scholars in the public schools at Clinton, Iowa, attend school but half a day—the boys in the morning and the girls in the afternoon. Half is often more than the whole.

☞ Some curious student of language has discovered that the exclamations, "O dear," "Dear me," "Alas," &c., are merely distortions of the Italian, from which we have borrowed them, the first being *O dio* (O God); the second, *Dio mio* (my God); and the third, *Ah me lasso* (Ah, me weary).

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

CALIFORNIA.—The telegraph brings news from California of the prevalence of severe storms on the western coast of the United States.

The severest storm for many years has prevailed at San Francisco. Most of the shipping in the harbor has been damaged. The city has suffered to a great extent.

Reports from Sacramento Valley indicate that there has been a flood as destructive as those of 1861 and 1862. The whole valley was submerged, and travel was suspended in every direction. Several railroad accidents were caused by the tracks washing away, and some loss of life resulted. The American river is higher than ever before known. The levees at Sacramento withstood the flood, and no fears will hereafter be entertained of the safety of the city. The levees at Marysville broke away, and the greater part of the city is overflowed.

The roads on the Sierra Nevada Mountains are rendered impassable for animals, and the mails and express matter from Virginia City and other places in Nevada, are carried by men on foot. Such a disastrous storm has never heretofore been known in the mountains.

THE SOUTH.—Gen. Meade has left Washington for Atlanta, to assume command of the Third Military District.

Gov. Flanders, of Louisiana, has resigned, and Gen. Hancock has appointed Joshua Baker in his place. Mr. Baker is an old citizen of Louisiana.

Foreign Intelligence.

FRANCE.—Louis Napoleon received all the ambassadors of foreign powers in Paris on New Year's Day, and made them a very mild and peaceful speech.

At Paris it is conceded that the effort to assemble a General Conference to settle the Roman question is a failure, and that it has been abandoned by the Emperor.

GREAT BRITAIN.—The Fenians are reported as being still unusually active. The martello tower, near Cork, was stormed on the night of the 27th of December, and the arms and ammunition were carried off. The public excitement is again rekindled and all kinds of rumors are afloat.

An effort to destroy the Post-Office at Dublin, by means of Greek fire, on the 28th ult., was frustrated.

The house of Mr. Charles Mathew, (brother of Father Mathew,) near Cork, was attacked at night by a party of Fenians. Mr. Mathew had been apprised of the intended assault, and his mansion was filled with armed men, who met the Fenians with a galling fire and dispersed them.

Nothing satisfactory for the government has thus far resulted from the examination of the parties arrested and charged with being implicated in the Clerkenwell explosion. The case is about as mysterious as it was before the examination commenced.

Lord Strathnairn, commanding in Ireland, is disposing his forces in anticipation of outbreaks. Cork and Tipperary counties coming especially under his military notice.

The French police have discovered the headquarters of the Fenian Brotherhood to be in Paris. Many letters and documents were found, revealing the plans of organization, and furnishing lists of the Head Centres. These were all duly forwarded to London. It seems a plot was under-way to destroy by fire a portion of the Channel fleet.

SPAIN.—Queen Isabella, in her address from the throne at the opening of the Spanish Cortes, pledged the support of the nation to the support of the Pope's temporal power.

The Austrian frigate Novara, in command of Admiral Tegethoff, having on board the remains of the late Archduke Maximilian, arrived at Cadiz on the 27th of December.

ITALY.—"Vesuvius presented at daybreak this morning," says the Italia of Naples, 10th ult., "a truly magnificent spectacle. The whole of the upper cone, as well as the Atrio del Cavallo and the great furze plateau, was covered with snow. In the gray light of the morning the burning lava was to be seen ploughing the immense white surface in various directions, while a column of smoke rose from the central crater and ascended to a great height."

THE ABYSSINIAN WAR.—It is reported that King Theodore, on ascertaining the extent and power of the measures taken by this Government to effect the liberation of the English captives, has voluntarily released them himself. Doubtful.

Dr. Livingstone is alive and well. Positive advices just received from Africa leave no longer any doubt of his safety.

Two or three glances from eyes very bright,
Filling the soul with a dream of delight;
Two or three hopes and two or three fears,
Two or three smiles and two or three tears;
Two or three sighs that perfume the air,
Revealing emotions 'twere happy to share;
Two or three whispers that sink in the heart,
And are treasured till memory's strong empire depart;
These are love's toils, in which young hearts are caught,
And pearls of great price with false money are bought.

☞ SPURGEON.—Spurgeon has resolved to refuse all work away from home. For years, he says, I have preached from eight to ten times a week, besides issuing the weekly sermon, editing the magazine, overseeing the church, superintending the college, directing the orphanage, founding new churches, attending committees, and a thousand other things; but many signs indicate that there must be a pause. I am not less willing, but I am far less able than I was to serve the church by preaching.

☞ An Italian woman, named Cardenia, who resides in Baxter street, earns her livelihood by renting blacking utensils to indigent bootblacks at 10 cents per day.

☞ A Savannah paper tells us of a black woman who has had three children at a birth—two are black and the other white.

☞ It has been legally decided in England that a stamped fac-simile of a signature bears the same value as the written one.

☞ A Vermont bank, which was closing up its business, redeemed $3,850 more bills than it ever issued.

☞ A minister in Muscatine, Iowa, lately whipped his kitchen girl with a rope. He was fined $20.

An Unfortunate Kiss.

Not many months ago, says the Pittsburg Sunday Leader, a young divinity student of this city, modest yet brimful of talent, and earnest in his profession, received a call to one of the most pleasant cities of northern Ohio. He deemed it his duty to accept, and in a brief time won the love and admiration of his flock. He not only graced the pulpit in his gospel ministrations, but was the life and spirit of the social circle. No gathering of the young folks of the congregation was complete without the parson. He possessed the happy faculty of entering into all their amusements without in the least compromising the dignity of his sacred office. He was a good preacher and a good fellow, and especially the admired of all the ladies. But it was not to be thus always. At a party given by one of his flock, not many weeks ago, at which our ministerial friend was present, he was openly challenged by a mischievous and fun-loving damsel, just budding into the full charms of a perfect womanhood, to kiss her. Did he accept the challenge? We rather think he did. Could any one resist the sparkle of those bright eyes, or the mischievous pout of a pair of cherry lips that would have tempted the good St. Anthony from his propriety? In the presence of the whole company he overcame the well-feigned struggles of the young lady, and brushed from her dewy lips a salute as chaste as Diana, to say nothing of its being delicious as nectar or Knox's strawberries. But, alas for our young divine! The kissing did not meet the approval of the older heads of the church. The deacons and elders and the saintly old ladies, who either never had young blood in their veins, or had forgotten its quality in the sluggishness of vitality, met in solemn conclave, and decided the proceeding—our young clergyman's kiss—a most monstrous breach of ministerial privilege, and deserving of public censure and reprobation. Not one of them would have objected had he kissed one of the mothers in Israel; the crime was not in the kiss itself, but in that the kisser and kissed were both young and ardent. The upshot of the whole affair was that the young clergyman got notice that his conduct in the kissing aforesaid had brought grave reproach upon the church, and his resignation would be acceptable. He resigned, of course, and is at home awaiting another call—and this is the penalty the minister pays for that unfortunate kiss.

The Chassepot Rifle.

An officer of Northern Germany, who visited the camp at Chalons, publishes in the North German Gazette the following observation on the Chassepot:

"It is now idle to ask if this weapon is superior to the Prussian gun; the question at present is—to what extent that superiority could be injurious to us in case of a war with France. That depends on the precision with which the arm shall be used; but the natural vivacity of the French, and their deficiency in the patience which the Germans possess, will be a great obstacle to the acquisition of that perfection.

"During my stay in the camp I observed that the troops, who, with the exception of the Chasseurs, were all armed with the new musket, showed in its use a want of certainty, which is, besides, easily understood. However, it would be madness to attempt to conceal the superiority of this firearm. In facility of loading the Chassepot is superior to any other system at present known. The number of rounds which can be fired in a minute is—on the Dreyse system, 5; Schneider and Joslyn, 6; Milkbank, Remington, Rieler and Chabot, 7; and for the Chassepot, 8. The other qualities of this musket are—its weight is not great (8½ pounds the small bore,) and, what is more important, the flight of the projectile forms a low trajectory. The latter quality, conjointly with the facility of loading, is especially important in firing by command and at will; in one word, in every case where the mass of balls is the essential, and where the musket which fires most is the best. The Chassepot is lighter, and its work is much more elegant than that of the needle gun; that is why it is in complete accord with the views of the French soldiers; but it affords less resistance than others to long use in rainy weather."

From the Western Rural, Detroit, Mich.

THE GREAT AMERICAN TEA COMPANY.—I noticed in the last *Western Rural* an inquiry in regard to the Great American Tea Company, 31 and 33 Vesey street, and would say that we have received two bills from said company, and are well pleased with the tea in regard to price and quality.—*J. G. Brown, P. M., Kilbuck, Ill.*

We have received some other responses to a similar purport.

☞ Marigold is the newest color in silk.

THE MARKETS.

FLOUR—The market has been more active. About 5000 bbls sold in lots to the retailers and bakers, including 500 bbls City Mills family at $10,50; 200 bbls choice do at $12; superfine at $7,50@8,25; extra at $8,50@9,50; Northwest extra family at $9,75@11 for low grade and fancy; $10,50@12 for Penna and Ohio family, and $12,50@14 ₩ bbl for fancy brands, according to quality. Rye Flour is selling at $8,50@9 ₩ bbl, the latter rate for choice.

GRAIN—There has been very little demand for Wheat. About 20,000 bushels sold at $2,26@2,30 for common to fair red; $2,40@2,60 for good to prime; $2,55 for choice, and $2,65@2,80 ₩ bus for white, according to quality. Rye—1000 bus of southern sold at $1,58, and 4000 bus of Penna at $1,65@1,75 ₩ bus. Corn—14,000 bus of old yellow sold at $1,38@1,41; 20,000 bus of new Delaware and Penna yellow at $1,10@1,22, as to condition; 30,000 bus new western mixed at $1,17@1,20; small lots of old western mixed at $1,23, and 5000 bus new Delaware white at $1,13 ₩ bus, and $1,26@1,28 for new western mixed. Oats—22,000 bus sold at 75@78c ₩ bus, the latter rate for prime Pennsylvania.

PROVISIONS—The market continues dull. Sales of Pork at $21,50 for old, and $22,50 for new; $19,50 for prime do; and $18 for prime. Mess Beef, City packed, sells at $20@22. Bacon—Sales of Hams at 15@16½c; Sides are taken, in lots, at 12@14c, and Shoulders at 11½@12c. Green Meats—Sales of pickled Hams at 12@13½c, and Shoulders, in salt, at 9@9½c. Lard—sales in tes and bbls, at 13c, and Kegs at 13½@14c. Butter—Sales of old at 11@20c; new at 35@38c, and roll at 50@45c. Cheese—Sales at 15½@18c.

PHILADELPHIA CATTLE MARKETS.

The supply of Beef Cattle during the past week amounted to about 800 head. The prices realized from 9@10 cts ₩ lb. 100 Cows brought from $40 to 60 ₩ head. Sheep—2000 head were disposed of at from 5@6½ cts ₩ lb. 5000 Hogs sold at from $9,50 to 10,50 ₩ 100 lbs.

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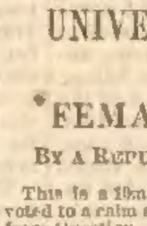

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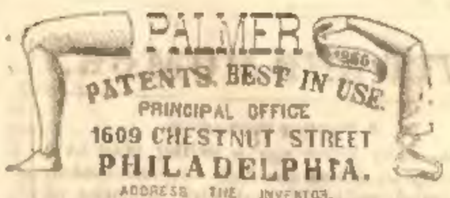

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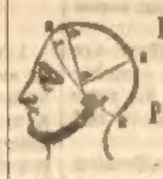

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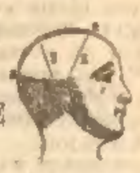

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WIT AND HUMOR.

A Proper Distance.

Not many years ago, a young man at a seminary in one of the New England states, was found guilty of disobeying the rules of the school, as he had actually walked with a young lady, contrary to orders previously given, and perfectly well understood!

Mr. Edwards, (as we will call him,) was accordingly called upon to make acknowledgments before the school, or be expelled. Whereupon, the said Mr. Edwards arose and said:

"I prefer by all means making an acknowledgment, to being expelled from school; and I acknowledge that I walked with the lady mentioned, and with my umbrella protected her from the storm! I also acknowledge that had I not done so, she might have taken cold, and a serious illness, or perhaps a consumption, might have been the result, in which case I should have blamed myself, and my teachers, knowing the circumstances, might also have blamed me."

The student resumed his seat with about as strong evidence of contrition in his countenance as was in the confession, and when a proper opportunity occurred, he inquired of one of the teachers how near a young lady a gentleman could walk, and not break the rules of the school.

"Well," said the teacher, "walking a distance of six feet from a lady, would not be considered an infringement of our regulations."

Soon after, Mr. Edwards was seen walking leisurely on the common, with a lady, he having hold of one end of a light pole, measuring six feet in length, while his lady had hold of the other end!

As they carried about the stick, (which in fact was no impediment to their enjoyment,) they chatted, and walked, and laughed; and walked, and laughed, and chatted, to their heart's content, but Mr. Edwards was never called upon to make but one acknowledgment.

Every-day Philosophy.

Hans Patrick C. Connor, formerly known by the *nom de plume* of "Beau Hackett," contributes the following to the St. Louis Journal:—

Never insure your life for the benefit of your wife for a greater sum than ten thousand dollars. A widow with more money than that is a dangerous legacy to leave posterity.

The "game of life" is very like a game of cards—time deals, death cuts, and every body is waiting for the last trump.

I think men drink in crowds because they are afraid to drink by themselves. It requires a good deal of courage to stand up alone and pour a glass of whiskey down your throat.

There are some inconsistencies in this world that I don't exactly understand. Everybody is anxious to get to heaven, but nobody is in a hurry about it.

If a man is without enemies I wouldn't give ten cents for his friends. The man who can please everybody hasn't got sense enough to displease anybody.

When an acquaintance says "How are you?" and rushes by you without pausing for a reply, I wouldn't, if I were in your place, follow him more than a mile to tell him I was well.

A convenient way of testing the affection of your intended is to marry another woman. If she doesn't love you, you will find it out immediately.

A Rum Expedient.

A student at Trinity, Dublin, a man of considerable ability, who, but for a disposition to indulge in drink, would have swept the college of all its prizes, after repeated acts of insubordination, originating in this unhappy fault, calls to the board, fines, etc., only escaped formal rustication by a pledge solemnly given to his tutor, accompanied by a convention that he was to have the daily privilege of one tumbler of punch, never to be exceeded unless wet through and thoroughly soaked, when a second might be taken. Now he, not having that confidence in the climate of his native country that he might have fairly possessed, conceived the idea of aiding nature, and might be spied toward six of an afternoon standing on the steps of his chamber, while his servant, with a watering-pot, performed the part of Pluvius from a window overhead, after which he would return to the company, and beg them to note the condition he was in, and be able to bear testimony, if called upon, that he was in the predicament specified in the act, and eligible for another tumbler.

A Yankee on the Frontier.

At the time the U. S. Army under Gen. Taylor occupied Brownsville, opposite Matamoras, during the spring of 1846, we found it very difficult to procure supplies of vegetables and fruit, and I had for the first time turned my attention to the Spanish language as the only means of communicating with the Mexicans, and had, with a great deal of difficulty, muttered a few useful phrases, when one day I started out in search of supplies for our mess.

I had not gone far when I met an old Mexican, as I supposed, with slashed trowsers, gilt buttons, and brimmed *sombrero*, and followed by several *senoras* and *senoritas* loading the *burros* packed with vegetables.

I halted, and pointing to a good-sized cabbage, said—

"*Quantas pour este, senor?*" (How much is that, sir?)

"Abeonte tue bits."

"You speak English very well indeed, senor," I remarked.

"Wall," said he, "I think I orter; I come from Massachusettes!"

A CERTAIN green customer, who was a stranger to mirrors, and who stepped into the cabin of one of our ocean steamers, stopped in front of a large pier-glass, which he took for a door, and seeing his own reflection, he said: "I say, mister, when does this ere boat start?" Getting no answer from the dumb reflection before him, he again repeated: "I say, mister, when does this ere boat start?" Incensed at the silent figure, he broke out, "Go to thunder, ye darned sassafras-colored, shock-headed bull-calf, you don't look as if you knew much anyhow!"

HAIR-DRESSING IN 1867.

LADY.—"My hair is not so thick as when you last dressed it, I fancy?"

HAIR-DRESSER.—"Well, ma'am, I must say it is not so voluminous as it was; but, really, one can *improvise* it so well now, that original material is not of much consequence!"

A Grain of Comfort.

Deacon Gloat lost his only son, a youth of eighteen. The bereavement was a severe one, and under its affliction the good man mourned as one without hope. Friends sympathized, condoled and prayed with him, but could not heal the wound or assuage the pain. He would not be comforted. His minister went to him, urged fortitude and forbearance; besought him to look into his heart and try to recall, by a remembrance of the past, some incident in the life of the deceased, which would be a source and means of consolation. "Think," he said, "of the virtues of the departed youth. Remember his love and obedience, and from the past draw a drop of consolation. Is there not," he continued, "some remembrance, some incidents of your son's life that can afford you consolation in this afflicting hour? Try and think, brother." After some reflection, the deacon replied that he thought there was one circumstance from which he found consolation. "O, yes, that's right. What is it, brother?" "Why," replied the deacon, "*the boy was a most inordinate eater!*"

How He Proved It.

It is the custom in Mexico for the church to require a foreigner, wishing to marry a native, to bring proof that he is not already a married man. An American, about to marry a senorita of very good family, was required to furnish the proof of his being a bachelor. Not finding any of his countrymen who knew him sufficiently well to testify to this fact, he determined to supply the deficiency with the oath of a native. Meeting a Mexican in the street whom he had never seen before, our countryman proposed to him that he should swear to his being unmarried, for the consideration of five dollars. The senor, after a moment's study, told the "Gringo"—"Get down on your hands and knees and creep about." Not exactly understanding what he was at, our friend obeyed, much to the detriment of his unmentionables. The other party then told him he was all right; that he would swear that he had known him *since the time he crawled!*

A PRETTY GOOD WAY.—A clergyman going to a miserly old lady to beg for a worthy object, found himself refused on the ground of poverty. Feigning himself much interested in her story, he expressed great surprise thereat, and said: "I had not thought you in such want;" and then taking out some money he said, "here is something that will do for the present purpose; when I call again I will bring you more." The old lady was so enraged that she gave him a good round sum to show him that she did not mean she was a pauper.

☞ It was a well-meant but novel compliment from a parishioner, who declared to her minister she did not know which most to admire—his last Thanksgiving sermon or his wife's new dress.

☞ If you want to get at the circumference of a man, examine him among men; but if you want to get at his actual diameter, measure him at his fireside.

AGRICULTURAL.

Curiosities of French Market Gardening.

The visitor who passes through the markets of Paris cannot fail to be struck by the size and beauty of the fruits and vegetables displayed. There are huge and perfect pears, a glistening array of salads, enormous heads of snowy cauliflower, and giant stalks of asparagus, which attract attention no less for their size and faultless condition, than for vast quantities, all equally fine and large of their kind. These are due to the wonderful skill and patient industry of the French gardeners, who are unequalled by any others, either here or in Europe, in the art of cultivating market produce. One cause of this superiority is the devotion of the French to specialities. This system obtains as generally among the gardeners as among the men of arts and sciences.

An American market farmer or gardener divides his ground into many lots, and plants nearly every variety of truck known to the market. The French gardener gives himself up to the cultivation of a special class or succession of fruits or vegetables, and by long study and practice, by experimenting with various manures, soils, and modes of culture, arrives at the production of a perfect crop of his speciality, season after season, with unerring certainty. He is also much more economical of space and more prodigal of labor than we are; as, in fact, than we need be. He seldom suffers his ground to lie fallow; crop succeeds crop in endless rotation: the cauliflower is set among the melon hills, ready to spread as soon as the melons are gathered. Between the rows of asparagus are planted early potatoes, lettuce, &c., in such a manner as to keep the ground constantly fruitful; and when the weather becomes frosty, and the sun loses a goodly share of its forcing power, large bell glasses are employed, one of which is placed over each plant—especially in the case of the salads—and heat is thus concentrated upon it until its full growth is fairly attained.

The enormous size of the French asparagus is chiefly due to the manner of planting. Instead of setting the plants closely together, as we do, a space of at least six inches square is allowed to each "stool," which enables it to suck a large amount of nutriment from the soil, and become a strong and solid plant. Each stool is also manured repeatedly every season, the soil being carefully scraped away down to the roots, the compost placed around them, and the earth put back again.

The French system of cultivating the apple, pear, and peach is also peculiar. The trees are all grafted and dwarfed. A strong wire is stretched along in front of each row, about three feet above the ground. Upon this wire a single branch of each tree is trained, and, as soon as well started, this branch is made, by heavy pruning, the only fruit-bearing one on the tree. The consequence is, that the entire strength of the tree goes to the nourishing of the fruit upon this branch, and this fruit becomes large and fair in proportion. This process, by-the-by, is borrowed from the Chinese.

The pear, however, is also largely grown in the pyramidal and other forms, but almost always from dwarfed stock.

In the cultivation of the peach the French gardeners have shown a curious and fanciful skill. Near the town of Montreil, a few miles only from Paris, there is a large number of gardens, enclosed in whitewashed walls, against the surface of which peach trees are trained in many fanciful forms. One of these is known as the "Napoleon peach." This is a specimen so trained as to figure in very large letters against the wall the name "Napoleon," a single branch going to the formation of each letter, and the whole surrounded by a wreath composed of two large boughs trained in a circle. There are many other curiosities in French market gardening and pomology, the details of which are too long for the compass of a single article.

On Eating Pork.

About once each year, near the time when the farmer has dressed the swine which he has been feeding for a twelvemonth, some persons commence a tirade against the use of pork as food. Whether these persons have been using pork grown upon the garbage of city gutters, or whether they have indulged in a surfeit upon that which was good, does not appear, and the reasons why they declaim against its use are no more apparent.

Most swine in New England are fed upon grain of some kind, skim milk, buttermilk whey, boiled potatoes, scraps from the table, and, during all the growing season, with fresh weeds, and short, sweet grass. To these are added, during the season of fattening, pumpkins, squashes, carrots and other roots, boiled and mixed with various kinds of meal. Salt is occasionally given to them, and in some cases pork and beef scraps from which nearly all the fatty matter has been extracted by pressure. They have clean and comfortable sleeping places, and although they sometimes wallow in the mud in hot weather to get on a coat which protects them from the flies, they are neat in their habits when properly treated.

There is no reason apparent to us why their flesh is not as wholesome as that of any animal used as our food. We have always used it freely, and have found it just as easy of digestion as beef or mutton. The principal reason, we think, why many persons speak against it, is that they eat *too much* at once! It is so delicious when properly cooked, and well sustained with cranberry sauce or currant jelly, that a pound or two at one meal would be quite likely to bring on some *grunting*, or a nightmare during the hours of sleep. Taken sparingly, morning or noon, it will be found nutritious, easy of digestion, and exceedingly palatable to most persons. We have, more than once, expressed the opinion that our people eat too much meat in warm weather—that once a day is often enough. There is, however, a great difference in persons in this respect; some, even in childhood, always preferring animal diet to vegetable, and others preferring the vegetable; and this preference continues through life, and if not gratified the health seems to suffer. Hall's Journal of Health has a sensible article on eating pork, in which our views are well expressed, as follows:—

"There is no trouble in eating pork in a cold climate. It is needed—or some fatty meat, for the support of life, while at the South vegetable diet is better. But whether the hog should be eaten, depends on the manner in which he is kept. If he be kept as a mere scavenger on filth and rottenness, the meat would be unfit to eat, as its food must enter into its composition. We see this in the difference between the hogs fed on acorns and those fed on corn. Any animal that lives upon the filth and waste of cities, should be rejected as food. But if the hog can be kept cleanly and on proper food, pork is as healthy as beef, or poultry, or fish.—*New England Farmer.*

[NOTE. *We think that good* pork may be eaten with impunity, in proportion to the amount of exercise that is taken in the open air. It is good food for farmers, seamen, wood-choppers, &c., and bad for those who lead inactive and sedentary lives.—*Ed. Post.*]

Items.

HIRAM W. KEEVER, while at work in a hay press at Coeymans Hollow, N. Y., got into the box to arrange some part of it, when it closed upon him and pressed him to death. His body was flattened to less than four inches in thickness.

A CORRESPONDENT of the Western Rural says that crib-biting in horses is no "vicious habit," as generally believed, but simply an instinctive effort to relieve pain caused by the teeth of the animal being crowded together, and that the proper remedy is to run a very thin file between the teeth which press together.

RATS.—To catch a rat alive, smear him with kerosene oil, and let him go, it is said will drive all the rats away. Or, a little soft potash spread near their holes will make their feet smart, and as they seek relief by licking them, both mouth and feet will become sore, and the rats will abandon the premises in disgust.

RECEIPTS.

RICE CAKE (OR PUDDING).—Take a tin pan and grease it so as to make bread crumbs stick to the inside all over. Wash four ounces of rice and put it in another vessel with a pint and a half of milk, on the fire. When cooked, add three tablespoons of sugar. Simmer five minutes more. Put the rice in a bowl to cool. Stir in four or five yolks of eggs. Beat the four whites to a stiff froth, and mix it in. Put it in the pan spoken of at first, and put it in the oven. Grease a piece of paper if your oven is too hot, and lay it on the top of the cake.

SAUCE FOR THE RICH.—A small tablespoon of butter and one of flour stirred on the fire. Then a tablespoon of sugar and a gill of water, a little piece of lemon rind. Drop in a little white wine and the sauce is done.

APPLE AND POTATO PUDDING.—Half a pound of apples, a quarter of a pound of mashed potatoes, six eggs well beaten, a small lemon, a quarter of a pound of butter, sugar to your taste, mix together, and bake with a paste round the dish.

NEW MODE OF MAKING COFFEE.—Dr. Ratier assures us that the aroma of coffee is better extracted by cold water than by hot. For this purpose, he recommends that four ounces of good coffee, properly roasted and ground, be mixed into a pap, or thin paste, with cold water, and left to steep, covered closely, for a night. Next day pour this pap carefully on fine linen, placed in a glass funnel, in a bottle. A single spoonful of this very strong infusion, poured into a cup of boiling milk, will give the whole a delightful aroma. Or, one part of the infusion, and two parts of water, put on the fire till it just boils, will yield a delicious coffee. The strong essence should be kept in a closely-stopped bottle.

BAKED FRESH PORK.—Take a leg of fresh pork, skin it, put it in a vessel. Take salt, pepper, two tablespoons of vinegar, four tablespoons of sweet oil, four bay leaves, four sage leaves, and a gill of white wine, and with this mixture baste the leg several times a day, for three days or so, and then bake it, well done.

WHITE BEANS.—These beans are called haricot beans, and require a great deal of boiling. The best plan of cooking them is to soak them in cold water for three hours, and then to put them in a large saucepan of cold water, with some salt and a lump of butter in it, and let them simmer gently until quite tender; on no account should they be boiled quickly, otherwise the skins will burst. Strain them in a collender when they are tender, and put them into another saucepan, with some butter, chopped parsley, salt, and pepper. Stir the beans continually, until the butter is well mixed with them; add some strained lemon-juice, and serve them hot. They are excellent when eaten with roast mutton.

POTATOES GLAZED.—Boil well; skin them; choose the most floury; roll them in yolk of egg, and place them before the fire to brown.

HARD WATER.—A little camphor, placed in hard water, will soften it, and prove delightfully refreshing as well. River water is considerably softened by boiling and exposure to atmospheric influence.

PICKLED OYSTERS.—Lay the oysters on a sieve to drain the liquor from them; leave it to settle, then pour off the clear portion, and boil it up well with pepper, salt, mace, and ginger to the taste; then wash the oysters well in several waters to remove all the slime, and give them one boil up in the liquor.

THE RIDDLER.

Enigma.

WRITTEN FOR THE SATURDAY EVENING POST.

I am composed of 8 letters.
My 1, 4, 7, 5, is a small insect.
My 1, 4, 3, 5, is disagreeable.
My 1, 2, 6, is a girl's nickname.
My 1, 5, 2, 7, is an article of food.
My 1, 2, 6, 5, is a companion.
My 1, 5, 3, 5, signifies a boundary.
My 2, 4, 3, is sometimes poisonous.
My 2, 4, 1, is a command.
My 2, 3, 7, signifies skill.
My 2, 7, 6, 8, 3, is a perfume.
My 2, 3, 1, is a member.
My 3, 8, 1, is an animal.
My 3, 4, 6, 5, is a ceremony.
My 3, 2, 7, is an animal.
My 3, 5, 8, 1, is a bundle.
My 3, 5, 2, 3, is a position.
My 3, 8, 3, 5, is seldom seen.
My 5, 2, 6, is what all must do.
My 5, 1, 4, 3, is an eastern prince.
My 5, 1, 4, 7, means to throw out.
My 5, 1, 1, 5, 6, is an insect.
My 6, 5, 8, 3, is a fluid.
My whole is a town in Ohio.

W. H. MORROW.

Irwin Station, Pa.

Enigma.

WRITTEN FOR THE SATURDAY EVENING POST.

My 7, 5, 2, 9, belongs to the eye.
My 1, 9, 2, 4, 8, is an emblem of woe.
My 9, 2, 1, 5, is a generation.
My 4, 8, 2, 1, 5, is quiet.
My 9, 2, 7, 5, is to value.
My 4, 8, 7, 5, 3, is a man's name.
My 4, 9, 2, 7, 5, is to talk idly.
My whole is a name and a trade.

AMICUS.

Problem.

WRITTEN FOR THE SATURDAY EVENING POST.

Required, the perpendicular height of a triangular pile of balls, each six inches in diameter, having five balls on each side of the base, and terminating with a single ball at the top. FRANCIS M. PRIEST.

☞ An answer is requested.

Problem.

WRITTEN FOR THE SATURDAY EVENING POST.

In the centre of a circular field of 25 acres there is a circular pond, whose diameter is 100 feet; there is a walk around the field, one around the pond, also one from the shortest distance from the outside walk to the walk around the pond, all of equal width. These walks consume one-fourth of the whole field. Required, the width of the walks. W. H. SANDS.

New Westville, Preble Co., Ohio.

☞ An answer is requested.

Mathematical Problem.

WRITTEN FOR THE SATURDAY EVENING POST.

The gauge of a certain railroad is 6 feet, and the curves are of 2,000 feet radius. How much higher must the outer rail be than the inner one that a train running at a speed of 40 miles an hour may press on both rails alike? ARTEMUS MARTIN.

Franklin, Venango Co., Pa.

☞ An answer is requested.

Conundrums.

☞ Why is a boy like a puppy? Ans.—Because he is a younker (young cur.)

☞ How do we know Lord Byron was good-tempered? Ans.—Because he always kept his choler (collar) down.

☞ Why is a postman in danger of losing his way? Ans.—Because he is guided by the directions of strangers.

☞ What stone should have been placed at the Garden of Eden after the expulsion? Ans.—Adam ain't in (Adamantine.)

Answers to Last.

MISCELLANEOUS ENIGMA—Appleton's American Cyclopaedia, worth eighty dollars. CHARADE—Hippopotamus. (Hip-po-pot-a-mus.)

Impersonation of Common Things.

The wind is a musician! We extend a silken thread in the crevice of the window, and the wind finds it and sings over it, and goes up and down the scale over it, and poor Paganini must go somewhere else for honor, for lo! the wind is performing on a single thread. It tries almost everything upon the earth, to see if there is music in it; it persuades a tone out of the great bell in the tower, when the sexton is at home asleep; it makes a mournful harp of the giant pines, and it does not disdain to try what sort of a whistle can be made of the humblest chimney in the world. How it will play upon a great tree till every leaf thrills with the note in it, and wind up the river that runs at its base for a sort of murmuring accompaniment. And what a melody it sings when it gives a concert with a full choir of the sea, and performs anthems between the two worlds, and goes up, perhaps, to the stars that love music most and sang it first. Then how fondly it haunts old houses; moaning under the eaves, singing in the halls, opening old doors without fingers, and sighing a measure of some sad old song around the fireless and deserted hearth.

☞ A gentleman, on meeting a friend a day or two ago, asked him his opinion about the "Roman Question." "Oh! hang the 'Roman Question,'" replied the person addressed, "I am tired of it; I wish it were at the bottom of the sea!" "Not a bad idea," quickly observed the first speaker; "for in *that* case we might possibly get the long-desired *solution* of it!"

☞ An Alabama paper announced that it would keep silent in regard to a "certain little affair," if a bottle of champagne were sent to the office. The editor received seven bottles from seven different parties.

☞ Few people look on any object as it really is; but regard it through some fantastic prism presented by their own prejudices, which invest it with a false color.